

University of Warwick institutional repository: <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap>

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick

<http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap/36967>

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it. Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

**Paranoia and Irony in the Anglophone Detective Narrative and the Novels
of Umberto Eco**

Jonathan Benjamin Key

PhD. in English Literature

University of Warwick

Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies

March 1999

Paranoia and Irony in the Anglophone Detective Narrative and the Novels of Umberto Eco

ABSTRACT

The thesis provides a reading of Umberto Eco's three novels, *The Name of the Rose*, *Foucault's Pendulum*, and *The Island of the Day Before*, that, while it acknowledges the importance of the Italian literary tradition in which they stand, also seeks to explain why their author appeals so frequently to literary models outside Italy, and in particular the Anglo-American detective genre.

Chapter One explains Eco's relationship to the development of Italian literature through his lifetime. It is noted that Eco is beginning, both in his semiotics and his fiction, from a position where post-structuralism has been extensively explored by neo-avant-garde writers. Eco positions himself alongside such writers as Italo Calvino and Jorge Luis Borges, who wish to explore the ludic possibilities of working within structures, while all the time acknowledging the epistemological limitations of so doing. Eco's chosen structure, more often than not, is the highly defined genre of the detective story.

From here, the following chapters engage in close readings of the three novels, with particular emphasis on *The Name of the Rose* and *Foucault's Pendulum*, demonstrating that they explore problems of interpretation central to the detective narrative. In doing this, they display an intimate knowledge of generic developments within the detective tradition, and of the philosophical and aesthetic uses made of the genre by other writers. The embedding of intertextual references to other detective narratives within Eco's novels is an important factor, as they come together to form a narrative of epistemological inquiry that itself follows Eco's philosophical progress through the years. In short, the novels, *inter alia*, map a systematic inquiry into the possibility of systematic inquiry. They reserve the space to engage in such an ironic and self-referential project precisely through their fictionality.

CONTENTS

	Contents	1
	Acknowledgements	2
	A Note on Eco in English	3
	Introduction	6
1	Eco and the Italian Literary Context	15
2	Criminal Abduction in <i>The Name of the Rose</i>	78
3	Diabolical Logic in <i>Foucault's Pendulum</i>	137
4	Endless Speculation in <i>The Island of the Day Before</i>	217
	Conclusion	272
	Bibliography	291

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was made possible through the award of a studentship grant by the British Academy. It was also assisted by the generous opportunity of study afforded by the English Department of the University of Madison-Wisconsin, particularly Professor Jacques Lezra.

The strenuous and constant support of Dr Cris Nash and Dr Peter Davidson were vital to the completion of this thesis. I would also like to thank other members of the Department of English at the University of Warwick for their advice and comments, particularly Professor Michael Bell, Professor Jeremy Treglown and Dr Peter Mack. I was fortunate also to benefit from Dr Jane Stevenson's critical acumen. Liz Cameron and Pauline Wilson offered invaluable practical assistance.

Acknowledgements are also due to Jennifer Lorch, Dr Michael O'Neill, Andrew Biswell, Nicholas Ferguson, Joanna Townsend, David Morley, Ian MacLellan, Dr Helen Taylor, Dr Gill Frith, and particularly Paul Williams. None of the above are responsible for the manner in which I have used their advice.

I must also acknowledge my parents, family and friends for unquestioning support of all kinds. Most of all, I thank Claire Ferguson for her complete and loving support.

A NOTE ON ECO IN ENGLISH

As far as the novels are concerned, Umberto Eco is an Italian writer whose works are known to Anglophone readers only through the translations of William Weaver. Hence, although I am not reading the novels as an Italianist, I have throughout taken the Italian versions of the novels as authoritative, although from time to time changes of meaning or detail observed in the English versions may provide information about the production of the novels. I have therefore quoted the Italian original followed by Weaver's translation, which Eco has been able to supervise. The only exception is in those cases where the English omits or obscures relevant information, where I have supplied my own translation. The two page numbers supplied refer, in order, to the Italian edition, then the English translation, even when the published translation has not been used. So as not to disrupt the reader needlessly, where the quotation is integrated into the main text the Italian has been relegated to a footnote. When dealing with other literature in Italian, French or German (in other words, work which Eco might be expected to have encountered in the original), I have followed a similar procedure.

The situation is rather more complex when it comes to the rest of Eco's output. A significant amount of his journalism has not been, and may never be, translated, as it is topical, often satirical, and aimed squarely at an Italian audience. As such, it is of marginal interest to this study. More important is the status of Eco's academic work, and this has been complicated by Eco's growing familiarity with, and employment of, the English language.

The problem is exemplified by the case of the first of Eco's books to appear in English, *A Theory of Semiotics*.¹ This began as a translation of his 1968 book, *La struttura assente*, but even though Eco is not particularly noted for a radical shifting of his views over time, he evidently found it impossible to express in English in 1973 what he had proclaimed in Italian in 1968.² This was perhaps because the task of challenging the dominant Structure, politically speaking, no longer seemed immediately feasible. Whatever the reason, however, Eco's solution was to rewrite

¹ Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976). Eco gives an account of the history of the book in his Foreword, pp.vii-ix.

² Umberto Eco, *La struttura assente* (Milan: Bompiani, 1968).

the book rather than just translate it. The result was an English work barely recognisable as *La struttura assente*.

Eco claims that 'to re-write in another language means to *re-think*'.³ However, the fact that Eco was able to translate *A Theory of Semiotics* into Italian as a distinct new book, *Trattato di semiotica generale*, which, ironically, appeared before the English version, indicates that it was not so much the issue of language, but of time that necessitated the rewriting.⁴ Eco's involvement in, or rethinking of, his books in English means that they tend to resemble revised editions rather more than straightforward translations. The exception is where he consciously decides to leave the text alone, as a representation of his thinking at a certain moment in time -- as is the case with the English translation of *Il problema estetico in Tommaso d'Aquino*.⁵ Perhaps because the original version was his doctoral thesis, written in 1954, when it came to republication in Italian, Eco declined to amend his argument in the light of later research, although he felt no such compunction about correcting the style.⁶ In effect, the work could be meaningfully resolved as a functional part of Eco's current thinking, and was reduced to the level of history. In this instance, the English translation simply follows the Italian revision, but this is an unusual case. The later semiotic works are translated within a few years of publication of Italy, so that while Eco's thinking may have altered, the issues addressed are more likely to continue to be on his agenda. In these cases pursuit of the original version must be tempered with an awareness that later versions, be they new editions or translations, can prove valuable in expressing Eco's thinking at certain moments in his career.

The status of Eco's various essays and lectures is frequently even less clear-cut than with the books. Collections of essays are broken up and reincorporated in different configurations for the English market, sometimes for reasons of cultural specificity, but just as often because they have been superseded. Furthermore, the

³ *A Theory of Semiotics*, p.vii-viii.

⁴ Umberto Eco, *Trattato di semiotica generale* (Milan: Bompiani, 1975).

⁵ Umberto Eco, *Il problema estetico in Tommaso d'Aquino* (Milan: Bompiani, 1970), translated by Hugh Bredin as *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1988).

⁶ The thesis was published two years after completion, as *Il problema estetico in San Tommaso* (Turin: Edizione di filosofia, 1956).

lectures that Eco delivers on the international circuit are read in Italian, English, German or French, according to audience. It can be that only Eco himself knows in some cases which is the original form, if it is even applicable to talk of a single, original form. So, the lectures that appear in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* may be supposed to have been written for the specific audience to which they were delivered at Cambridge, even if they contain anecdotes and ideas that had appeared elsewhere in Italian first.⁷ Indeed, we find the same anecdotes about the novels appearing in different forms ever since the publication of *The Name of the Rose*.

The result is that references to Eco's academic work can only be assessed on a case by case basis. It is unusual for the Italian to be the single, original, authoritative version. Indeed, in recent years it is sometimes the English that is translated into Italian. In quoting, therefore, I have to consider whether the words are reinforced or superseded by the subsequent version, and, whichever is the case, judge which is then the most relevant to the moment of thought being examined. In practice, this often means that to quote the Italian original (if indeed it is original) is redundant. I have only quoted the Italian for academic and journalistic work where no English equivalent exists, or where it chronicles the moment in a way that has been erased or altered in the English version.

⁷ Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, with Richard Rorty, Jonathan Culler and Christine Brooke-Rose, edited by Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

INTRODUCTION

When *Il nome della rosa* was published in September 1980, Professor Umberto Eco's high profile as an academic writer with a strong journalistic background meant that the novel received a great deal of attention.⁸ This attention only increased with the selection of the novel for both the Premio Strega and the Prix Medici awards. By the time the English translation, *The Name of the Rose*, appeared in 1983, the novel was a runaway success, and would continue to sell worldwide in huge numbers. Even allowing for the fact that it has been on the market for eight years longer than Eco's second novel, *Il pendolo di Foucault* (*Foucault's Pendulum*), and fourteen more than his latest, *L'isola del giorno prima* (*The Island of the Day Before*), *The Name of the Rose* continues to be Eco's most popular work by far.⁹

The Name of the Rose was turned into a successful film, directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud, in 1986, and this undoubtedly contributed to the continued popularity of the first novel. Interviewed at the time of the publication of *L'isola del giorno prima*, Eco confirmed that *The Name of the Rose* had sold over fifteen million copies worldwide, compared to just over eight million -- still a very substantial number -- of *Foucault's Pendulum*.¹⁰ *The Name of the Rose* has also continued to gain reader's awards, in November 1997 being voted by the international readership of *The Good Book Guide* as the best novel published over the last twenty years.¹¹ At the same time, the critical reception of the novels, laudatory for *The Name of the Rose*, became somewhat mixed for *Foucault's Pendulum*, and predominantly hostile for *The*

⁸ Umberto Eco, *Il nome della rosa* (Milan: Bompiani, 1980), all references to the corrected twelfth edition (1983), translated by William Weaver as *The Name of the Rose* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1983).

⁹ Umberto Eco, *Il pendolo di Foucault* (Milan: Bompiani, 1988), translated by William Weaver as *Foucault's Pendulum* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1989); Umberto Eco, *L'isola del giorno prima* (Milan: Bompiani, 1994), translated by William Weaver as *The Island of the Day Before* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1995).

¹⁰ Lee Marshall interviewing Umberto Eco, 'I started by lying on a Fijian beach', *European*, 7 Oct 1994, *Élan*, p.12.

¹¹ Nigel Reynolds, 'Eco's Rose named best novel of past 20 years in world poll', *Daily Telegraph*, 10th November 1997, p.4.

Island of the Day Before. In fact, the success of Eco's novels, both commercial and critical, has been in direct proportion to the closeness with which his novels follow the generic rules of the detective story. This should perhaps not be too surprising, given the huge international market for detective fiction, but nevertheless it marks the participation of the fiction in the detective genre as an element of primary importance in evaluating their status.

As we will see, this is only a preliminary reason for engaging upon the current study. The similarity of academic research to (fictional) detective work, a similarity also implicit in Eco's fictional project, is another strong reason to examine Eco's novels through the filter of 'the detective narrative', where this is defined as that fiction concerning the investigation and solution of a crime, tending to focus on the investigative capabilities of the detective. I will use the term 'narrative', for preference, to acknowledge immediately that the genre displays particular narratological elements in its defining characteristics. To perform this type of investigation is immediately to prioritise structural concerns (see, for instance, Tzvetan Todorov's 'The Typology of Detective Fiction').¹² It is also to accept that there is an apparent bias in the novels towards mass culture, understandable initially in terms of a Postmodernist aesthetic, as suggested by Michael Holquist:

what the structural and philosophical presuppositions of myth and depth psychology were to Modernism (Mann, Joyce, Woolfe, etc.), the detective story is to Post-Modernism (Robbe-Grillet, Borges, Nabokov, etc.)¹³

Holquist's position is a starting point for understanding Eco's novels as Postmodernist works, and I will be comparing Eco's output with the detective stories of Robbe-Grillet, Borges and Nabokov, among others. However, it is equally important to place Eco's fiction in the larger history of the detective tradition. I will argue that this is necessary because a close reading of the novels reveals that they

¹² Tzvetan Todorov, 'Typologie du roman policier', in *Poétique de la prose* (Paris: Seuil, 1971, pp.55-65, translated by Richard Howard as 'The Typology of Detective Fiction', in *The Poetics of Prose*, with a foreword by Jonathan Culler (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977), pp.42-52.

¹³ Michael Holquist, 'Whodunit and Other Questions: Metaphysical Detective Stories in Post-War Fiction', *New Literary History* 3:1 (1971), pp.135-56, p.135.

map with some accuracy the contours of the development of the detective tradition, and that this in turn reflects a basic problem of narrative fiction with which Eco wrestles throughout his fictional output.

This basic problem is the intense awareness of linguistics in contemporary critical theory, leading to what might be termed the Post-structuralist crisis of referentiality. This is the overwhelming awareness through the latter half of the twentieth-century not simply of the conventionality of the relation between signifier and signified, but the potentially destructive possibilities of that conventionality being insuperable, of there being no reliable grounding for meaning. Of course, the realisation that language cannot directly represent the world in a simple one-to-one relationship of equivalence goes back much further than this century. Eco himself has argued that the crisis of referentiality was a fact of linguistic theory in the Middle Ages, and we might extend this as far back as Plato's *Cratylus*.¹⁴ Moreover, we can see throughout Eco's work signs of his awareness that the crisis of referentiality is always happening, has been happening since the very beginning. One of Eco's more curious essays, 'On the Possibility of Generating Aesthetic Messages in an Edenic Language,'¹⁵ has been correctly identified by Teresa De Lauretis as central to Eco's thinking on problems of linguistic referentiality.¹⁶ As we will see, the essay dramatises the Biblical Fall of Man as a Fall of Language. The Fall is from an Edenic state of direct referentiality, of non-arbitrary signification, with a language,

¹⁴ See Umberto Eco and Constantino Marmo (eds.), *On the Medieval Theory of Signs* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1989), and Umberto Eco, *Arte e bellezza nell'estetica medievale* (Milan: Bompiani, 1987), partial version translated by Hugh Bredin as *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986). This volume is another example of how Eco's books are sometimes translated as works-in-progress, with no absolute correspondence ever achieved between versions in different languages.

¹⁵ 'Sulla possibilità di generare messaggi estetici in una lingua edenica', *Strumenti Critici* 5:11 (1971), translated by Bruce Merry as 'On the Possibility of Generating Aesthetic Messages in an Edenic Language', in *Twentieth Century Studies* 6:7 (1972), revised translation published as Chapter Three in *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), pp. 90-104.

¹⁶ Teresa De Lauretis, 'Gaudy Rose: Eco and Narcissism', *SubStance* 47 (1985), 13-29. The importance of the essay is also identified by Enzo Neppi, 'Love and Difference in *The Name of the Rose*', *Hebrew University Studies in Literature and the Arts* (1989), 52-82.

as Enzo Neppi has it, 'perfect, unchangeable and transparent,' to a 'fallen' language of arbitrary relationship between signified and signifier.¹⁷ It is through the production of aesthetic messages (i.e. messages that seek to modify the act of signification for reasons other than the most simple designation) that the Fall takes place, enabling Eco to 'demonstrate a language's own capacity for generating self-contradiction'.¹⁸

The understanding of the 'crisis of referentiality' that this essay shows is that it is not an event within history. Instead, it is an element of language present from the start, from the first moment of history. Eco, having built his toy language to demonstrate its inevitable arbitrariness, returns from the fictional mode to make this very point with a Lèvi-Straussian nod:

Perhaps the language system incorporated this contradiction from its very beginnings and the prohibition myth was invented by our forefathers simply to explain such a scandalous state of affairs.¹⁹

It is worth noting here, given the importance of apocalypse in the novels, that the referential crisis can also be an indication of the end of history. The growing conviction of the monks within the abbey in *The Name of the Rose* that they are living in the last days before the apocalypse of Revelation is brought into a kind of realisation by the burning down of the library, the repository of language. Of the great monolith of words that stood in the abbey, all that the narrator, Adso, can reconstruct when he returns years after the conflagration is a 'miserable hoard' of fragments of books.²⁰ Adso's rescued collection, his impoverished miniature of the great library is, he realises, 'the result of chance and contains no message'.²¹ Thus, the degradation of language, always symbolically in process through the novel, is

¹⁷ Neppi, p.53.

¹⁸ *The Role of the Reader*, p.91. Of course, this implies that the language is necessarily neither perfect nor unchangeable, as Eco well knows.

¹⁹ *The Role of the Reader*, p.103.

²⁰ 'misero tesoro', *The Name of the Rose*, p.502; p.500.

²¹ 'esso è effetto del caso e non contiene alcun messaggio', *The Name of the Rose*, p.502; p.501.

as Enzo Neppi has it, 'perfect, unchangeable and transparent,' to a 'fallen' language of arbitrary relationship between signified and signifier.¹⁷ It is through the production of aesthetic messages (i.e. messages that seek to modify the act of signification for reasons other than the most simple designation) that the Fall takes place, enabling Eco to 'demonstrate a language's own capacity for generating self-contradiction'.¹⁸

The understanding of the 'crisis of referentiality' that this essay shows is that it is not an event within history. Instead, it is an element of language present from the start, from the first moment of history. Eco, having built his toy language to demonstrate its inevitable arbitrariness, returns from the fictional mode to make this very point with a Lèvi-Straussian nod:

Perhaps the language system incorporated this contradiction from its very beginnings and the prohibition myth was invented by our forefathers simply to explain such a scandalous state of affairs.¹⁹

It is worth noting here, given the importance of apocalypse in the novels, that the referential crisis can also be an indication of the end of history. The growing conviction of the monks within the abbey in *The Name of the Rose* that they are living in the last days before the apocalypse of Revelation is brought into a kind of realisation by the burning down of the library, the repository of language. Of the great monolith of words that stood in the abbey, all that the narrator, Adso, can reconstruct when he returns years after the conflagration is a 'miserable hoard' of fragments of books.²⁰ Adso's rescued collection, his impoverished miniature of the great library is, he realises, 'the result of chance and contains no message'.²¹ Thus, the degradation of language, always symbolically in process through the novel, is

¹⁷ Neppi, p.53.

¹⁸ *The Role of the Reader*, p.91. Of course, this implies that the language is necessarily neither perfect nor unchangeable, as Eco well knows.

¹⁹ *The Role of the Reader*, p.103.

²⁰ 'misero tesoro', *The Name of the Rose*, p.502; p.500.

²¹ 'esso è effetto del caso e non contiene alcun messaggio', *The Name of the Rose*, p.502; p.501.

completed. *Foucault's Pendulum*, from its extended play with ideas of overinterpretation and extrapolated meaning, reaches its own linguistic apocalypse, with Casaubon waiting resignedly for his fate to arrive, belatedly experiencing his own little revelation:

Che io abbia scritto o no, non fa differenza. Cercherebbero sempre un altro senso, anche nel mio silenzio. Sono fatti così. Sono ciechi alla rivelazione.

It makes no difference whether I write or not. They will look for other meanings, even in my silence. That's how They are. Blind to revelation.²²

A perpetual crisis does not mean, obviously, that historical investigations into the referential problem are disallowed. The opposite result in fact applies. Eco is able to portray in his novels a variety of historical moments -- the early fourteenth century in *The Name of the Rose*, the mid-seventeenth century in *The Island of the Day Before*, and the present day in *Foucault's Pendulum* -- where the crisis is both real and immediate. Informed by Eco's prior work on medieval semiotics, this is very much the sort of reading that Theresa Coletti offers in her valuable *Naming the Rose*, in which, *inter alia*, she sees addressed 'a fundamental topic of medieval language theory dating back to Plato's *Cratylus*: the problem of the origin of language in nature or convention'.²³

Such analyses, of which Coletti's is one of the fullest and most sensitive to Eco's academic training, inevitably rely on the substantial quantity of academic, primarily semiotic, work that bears Eco's name. Much of this predates Eco's foray into narrative fiction, and so can be utilised in an attempt to portray a definite intellectual position from which the novels arise (although Coletti for one is careful to warn against a direct reading of the one mode against the other).²⁴ Such an attempt is understandable, particularly in the light of the increased topical parallelism through

²² *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.509; p.641.

²³ Theresa Coletti, *Naming the Rose: Eco, Medieval Signs and Modern Theory* (Ithaca and London: Cornell, 1988), p.19.

²⁴ See Coletti, pp.12-17.

the nineteen-eighties and nineteen-nineties of his fiction and non-fiction, exemplified by the cross-over between *Ricerca della lingua perfetta nella cultura europea* (*The Search for the Perfect Language*) and *The Island of the Day Before*, and the presentation of *Foucault's Pendulum* as the main area of debate between the contributors to the Tanner lectures and seminar at Cambridge in 1990, from which derives the collection *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*.²⁵

A disappointing limitation of this standard critical position, which treats the fiction as a series of illustrations of the theory, is the manner in which it almost exclusively focuses, with lip service to the contrary, on the technical aspects of Eco's non-fiction. This is to the detriment of the thematics, especially that revealed in his occasional essays and journalism. For every critic who approaches the texts from the direction of Eco's journalism and cultural semiotics, such as Robert F. Yeager and (to a certain extent) Peter Bondanella, there are dozens who start from Eco's more abstract theorising on textual and linguistic semiotics.²⁶ In 1989 Rocco Capozzi, who has contributed a good half-dozen items to the scholarship on Eco's fiction, could write that:

Perhaps the most common practice by critics was to consider *The Name of the Rose*, especially immediately after its publication, as an application of Eco's own theories from his well-known *A Theory of Semiotics* (1976) and *The Role of the Reader* (1979).²⁷

Capozzi may put his assessment in the past tense, but this normative reading of *The Name of the Rose* is still a critical commonplace, and the same situation has obtained with the publication of the two subsequent novels. While interested in the

²⁵ Umberto Eco, *La ricerca della lingua perfetta nella cultura europea* (Rome: Laterza, 1993), translated by James Fentress as *The Search for the Perfect Language* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

²⁶ Robert F. Yeager, 'Fear of Writing, or Adso and the Poisoned Text', *SubStance* 47 (1983), 40-53; Peter Bondanella, *Umberto Eco and the Open Text: Semiotics, fiction, popular culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

²⁷ Rocco Capozzi, 'Palimpsests and Laughter: The Dialogical Pleasure of Unlimited Intertextuality in *The Name of the Rose*', *Italica* 66:4 (1989), 412-28, 413. Capozzi himself can be included in this statement -- see Rocco Capozzi, 'Scriptor e Lector in fabula ne *Il nome della rosa*', *Quaderni d'Italianistica*, 3:2 (1982), 219-229.

novels as models of narrative practice, the dominant critical approach to Eco's fiction has tended to sideline the formal possibilities opened up by Eco's use of non-academic prose, and has continued to see the fiction, as De Lauretis saw *The Name of the Rose* back in 1981, as 'the elucidation of the semiotic work'.²⁸

This type of reading, taking the novels as manifestations or demonstrations of Eco's theories, is extremely seductive, and remains the default response of critics to his fiction. They are legitimate inasmuch as the novels demonstrably represent Eco's interests, semiotic and otherwise. However, representation is not the same as argumentation, and it is an oversimplification to read the novels purely as fictional versions of Eco's semiotic works. There is, always, the influence of form on the discourse that the novels appear to be setting up. Eco himself consistently distinguishes his novels from his other work on formal grounds. 'I write novels because I don't understand what happens in the world', he told one interviewer. 'If I had a clear idea I would write a scholarly work'.²⁹

The main form that I will be considering, as already indicated, is that of the detective story in its various manifestations. The structure of my analysis will therefore be somewhat mechanistic in its approach, if only to emphasise the tension present in all three of the novels, between a series of positions significant to fiction in the twentieth century. I will identify the novels' positioning on axes including the creative and the analytic, between the presentation of reality and the presentation of fiction, between the structuralist and the post-structuralist, between (in Sir Karl Popper's terms) the pseudo-scientific and the scientific, and between the novelist and the theorist. It goes without saying that these sets of oppositions are not always in

²⁸ 'la dimostrazione del lavoro semiotico', Teresa De Lauretis, *Umberto Eco* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1981), p.79. Examples of this critical attitude are too numerous to mention, but critics who overtly adopt this position as though it were uncontentious include Franco Schiavoni, 'Faith, Reason and Desire: Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', *Meanjin* 43:4 (1984), 573-81; Steven Sallis, 'Naming the Rose: Readers and Codes in Umberto Eco's Novel', *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 19:2 (1986), 3-12; and Bondanella's book, which assumes -- with some justification -- a basic chronological development in Eco's work that transcends generic considerations. Most of these readings can be traced back either to De Lauretis or to Walter E. Stephens' very influential review-article 'Ec[h]o in Fabula', *Diacritics* 13:2 (1983), 51-66.

²⁹ Helena de Bertodano, 'The man who knows too much: Interview', *Sunday Telegraph*, 8 Oct 1995, *Sunday Review*, p.15.

parallel with each other (indeed, they are not always oppositions), but they have a commonality that I will identify in terms of an opposition between the paranoid and the ironic. Therefore, I will explore each novel in terms of its relationship to the detective narrative, a relationship that is significantly different in each case, and then measure the consequences of this in terms of the tension between the paranoid and the ironic modes in Eco's fiction. The result will be an appreciation of the difficulty for a writer like Eco of negotiating the distance between the two poles identified by Jorge Luis Borges as the natural and the magical. In an essay of 1932, Borges wrote:

He distinguido dos procesos causales: el natural, que es el resultado incesante de incontables e infinitas operaciones; el mágico, donde profetizan los pormenores, lúcido y limitado. En la novela, pienso que la única posible honradez está con el segundo.

Two causal processes are to be distinguished: the natural, which is the incessant result of uncontrollable and infinite operations; the magical, in which the details prophesy, in clear and defined fashion. I think that in the novel the only possible integrity is with the latter.³⁰

I will be examining Eco primarily as an international author partaking of artistic traditions that arrive either through other writers of an international stature, or through international mass culture. In practice this frequently means making the assumption that certain anglo-american material is part of Eco's cultural background. Both the cultural ubiquity of certain anglophone material, particularly in the detective genre, and Eco's displayed knowledge of this material, serve to confirm the reasonability of this assumption. However, such a reading, if it is not to be an unbalanced and presumptuous one, must be prefaced by an assessment of Eco's place within his own cultural milieu. This operates in two main ways. First, there is the question of Eco's position in post-war Italian culture as a figure interacting with Italian literary theory, aesthetics, cultural criticism and politics. There is then the question of Eco's position within post-war Italian literature. I will address both of these issues in Chapter One. The latter of these is particularly important, as it will be seen that a negotiation with the detective tradition is a prominent feature of Italian

³⁰ Jorge Luis Borges, 'El arte narrativo y la magia', *Sur* 5 (Summer 1932), reprinted in *Obras Completas 1923-1972* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1974), pp.226-32, p.232, my translation.

literature since 1945, for instance in the work of Carlo Emilio Gadda and of Leonardo Sciascia. While Eco, like Jorge Luis Borges, to whom we will have cause to return frequently, is a determinedly international author in many respects, like Borges he inevitably reflects and explores certain concerns particularly germane to the literary culture of his homeland.

CHAPTER ONE

Eco and the Italian Literary Context

Introduction

Throughout his academic career, Umberto Eco has regularly written columns focusing mainly on Italian culture, first 'Diario minimo' for *Il Verri*, and currently, the fortnightly 'La bustina di Minerva' for *L'Espresso*.¹ However, although he has written on important Italian writers such as Manzoni and Pirandello in his role as an academic, Eco is noticeably more likely in his semiotic and critical works to reach for illustrative examples from the sphere of 'international literature' than from the Italian literary scene. The range of reference is from Joyce, Borges and Nabokov to Dumas, Alphonse Allais, Gérard de Nerval, Eugène Sue and even Ian Fleming. This, we may assume, is more to do with Eco's self-awareness as a critic operating on a world stage than a denial of his Italian influences. Furthermore, what Eco chooses to write about can only ever tell a part of the story. The literary culture to which Eco belongs, particularly the fiction of his contemporaries, cannot fail to have a measurable influence on his own fiction. An important task that must be performed before moving on to look at the essentially Anglo-American history of the detective story is to measure the extent to which Eco is also interacting meaningfully with post-war Italian literature. To a certain degree, the situation is obvious -- Italian literature contains responses and reflections of the detective tradition that figures so heavily in Eco's narrative work. We will also see, though, that the contours of Italian literature in general since 1945 reveal much about the intellectual and political rationale for Eco's chosen modes of making fiction.²

¹ Many of these are collected in *Diario minimo* (Milan: Mondadori, 1963), parts translated by William Weaver as *Misreadings* (London: Cape, 1993) and *Il secondo diario minimo* (Milan: Bompiani, 1992), parts translated by William Weaver as *How to Travel with a Salmon & Other Essays* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1994).

² Of particular relevance to the interface between fiction and politics in post-war Italy are Michael Caesar and Peter Hainsworth (eds.), *Writers & Society in Contemporary Italy* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1984) and John Gatt-Rutter's brief

To this extent, we must upon occasion look in some detail at aspects of Eco's novels which bear relation to the contemporary Italian political and literary landscape here, rather than in the chapter devoted to the particular novel. This permits the relevance to Eco's writing of the other material to be explored. Rather than laboriously and unnecessarily engage in complete readings of the novels at this point, I have restricted the analyses to those aspects of the novels pertaining to the Italian context being explored. Each novel is summarised at the start of the appropriate chapter.

Pre-1922: The Italian Literary Heritage

It is hardly conceivable that Eco's fiction would not bear some relationship to Dante's *La divina commedia*, the *sine qua non* of Italian literature. If nothing else, as Sven Ekblad points out in his extensive comparative reading of *The Name of the Rose* against Dante's masterwork, they have both produced works set in the midst of a theological crisis (personal, and, to an extent, public), where the narrator is guided for seven days by a wise, yet theologically unorthodox, teacher.³ Ekblad's enthusiasm for this link leads him to postulate a detailed underlying design for Eco's first novel based on the parallel (simultaneously with, apparently, parallels to other works such as Euripides' *The Trojan Women*) that may happily be classed with the paranoid interpretations against which Eco frequently aims himself. What may be more safely identified in Dante's influence on Eco is the debt he owes to the former's binding of poetry and theology into a cosmological unity. So, Guy P. Raffa recognises in Eco, along with Italo Calvino, a Dantesque affinity for 'precisely this notion of a cosmic, totalizing vision in a postmodern climate decidedly more receptive to local, fragmentary perspectives'.⁴ We should not be fooled by this into

overview, *Writers and Politics in Modern Italy* (London: Hodder, 1978).

³ Sven Ekblad, *Studi sui sottofondi strutturali nel «Nome della rosa» di Umberto Eco. Parte I. «La divina commedia» di Dante*, Etudes romanes de Lund 51 (Lund: Lund University Press, 1994).

⁴ Guy P. Raffa, 'Eco and Calvino Reading Dante', *Italica* 73:3 (1996), 388-409, 388.

supposing that Eco objects to 'local, fragmentary perspectives', particularly if we recall his aggressive promotion of the necessity of them in *La struttura assente*, where the idea of a locally applicable structure is placed up against the idea of a unitary, permanent code, which Eco labels an *ur-Code*. There, and elsewhere, Eco insists that the idea of an overarching and comprehensive code (the Structure) is illusory.⁵ Far better, he suggests, to engage in 'serial thought', the aim of which is 'to allow new codes to evolve historically and to discover new ones, rather than to trace them back to the original generative Code (the Structure)'.⁶ Even the term 'la struttura assente' emphasises this recognition of the importance of the idea of overall structure at the same time as asserting its unattainability. We are left with the task of promoting limited, alternate structures in the place of the absent Structure, upon which we must rely even as we acknowledge their falsity. Raffa is right in recognising that there is a tension in Eco, which, as we will see, becomes a motive force in the fiction, between the recognition of such a necessity, and the desire for that elusive totalising cosmology.

La divina commedia, as a cultural entity central to Italian identity, and a literary work resonant worldwide, serves Eco well as a base upon which to perform and demonstrate his investigations into overinterpretation. These investigations into esoteric interpretations of Dante began in 1986, while *Foucault's Pendulum* was still in preparation, and resulted in the volume *L'idea deforme: Interpretazione esoteriche di Dante*, for which Eco provided the introduction.⁷ Dante is important in the history of textual interpretation for the 'Letter to Can Grande' attributed to him, which adapts the idea of fourfold sense in scriptural exegesis to secular texts, specifically

⁵ See *La struttura assente*, p.323.

⁶ Umberto Eco, 'Series and Structure', Chapter Ten in *The Open Work*, translated by Anna Cangogni, with an introduction by David Robey (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), p.221. This book is predominantly a partial translation of *Opera aperta: forma e indeterminazione nella poetica contemporanea* (Milan: Mondadori, 1962), but the chapter in question derives from *La struttura assente*, pp.303-322.

⁷ Maria Pia Pozzato (ed.), *L'idea deforme: Interpretazione ermetiche di Dante*, with an introduction by Umberto Eco (Milan: Bompiani, 1992). Anna Longoni's review-article, 'Esoteric Conspiracies and the Interpretive Strategy', in *Reading Eco: An Anthology*, ed. by Rocco Capozzi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp.210-216, provides an account of the production of this volume.

his own. While Eco acknowledges this, and has written on Dante's 'Letter to Can Grande' itself, this is not the aspect of Dante that he has found most useful.⁸ The link to his view of *Foucault's Pendulum* can be seen to best advantage in the way esoteric interpretations of Dante are used illustratively in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, to enable a discussion of the 'semiosi ermetica' (Hermetic semiosis) that the novel tackles.⁹

More relevant to Eco's attempts at narrative fiction is the most famous Italian novel of the nineteenth century, Alessandro Manzoni's *I promessi sposi*.¹⁰ It is frequently cited by Eco, and he contributed an essay, 'Semiosi naturale e parola nei *Promessi sposi*', to a volume of semiotic analyses of Manzoni's classic.¹¹ A clue to how *I promessi sposi* influences Eco's own fiction appears in 'Regretfully, We Are Returning Your....' (parodically negative reader's reports on literary classics) in *Misreadings*, where the author is ironically criticised for 'a narrative constantly interrupted to allow the author to spout cheap philosophy or, worse, to paste together a linguistic collage, setting two seventeenth-century edicts between a dialogue half in Latin and adding pseudo-folk talk'.¹² Such a take on Manzoni's classic invites comparisons in particular to *The Name of the Rose*, with its frequent Latinity and various types of linguistic collage, some of which will be explored later. Rocco Capozzi, thinking of the playfulness of Eco's historical fiction, offers a parallel with *The Name of the Rose* in that *I promessi sposi* is 'particularly important as an

⁸ Umberto Eco, 'L'Epistola XIII, l'allegorismo medievale, il simbolismo moderno', in *Sugli specchi e altri saggi*, second edition (Milan: Bompiani, 1987), pp.215-41.

⁹ See *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, pp.53-60.

¹⁰ Alessandro Manzoni, *I promessi sposi* (Milan: 1827), revised edition in contemporary Tuscan published 1840, translated by Bruce Penman as *The Betrothed* (London: Penguin, 1972).

¹¹ Umberto Eco, 'Semiosi naturale e parola nei *Promessi sposi*', in *Leggere 'I promessi sposi'*, edited by Giovanni Manetti (Milan: Bompiani, 1989), pp.1-16.

¹² *Misreadings*, pp.42-3. *I promessi sposi* is accompanied by, amongst others, the Bible, *La divina commedia*, Kafka's *The Trial* and *Don Quixote*.

example of how historical and artistic (fictional) truths can be combined in producing a text that is both didactic and ludic in nature'.¹³

The most obvious formal influence on Eco's fiction is the conceit of the found manuscript with which Manzoni begins his novel, pushing to the foreground the issue of the novel as a reconstruction of history. The conceit in itself is not special to Manzoni. Its use puts the author in a venerable literary tradition that extends back through the enormously influential historical novels of Sir Walter Scott and the Romanticism of Ugo Foscolo, whose *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* of 1802 was inspired by Goethe's epistolary *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774), and then back again to the very origins of the novel, with the ostensible diaries, biographies or collected letters from which Laclos, Richardson, Defoe and, ultimately, Cervantes conjured their works. Hence, Eco's deliberate use of the framing device of the found manuscript in *The Name of the Rose*, *Foucault's Pendulum* and, loosely, of edited letters in *The Island of the Day Before*, need not specifically tie Eco to Manzoni's treatment of history, even for an Italian reader. Indeed, Roberto della Griva's account of his shipwreck in *The Island of the Day Before* is best understood as an homage to the novel's most illustrious ancestor, Defoe's *The Life and strange and surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*.

The main intention in Manzoni's use of the 'found manuscript' convention, at least by the time of the revised edition of 1840, is to highlight the theme that he will go on to develop throughout the rest of the novel of the political and hierarchical importance of language.¹⁴ While Eco is certainly interested in registers of language (witness the moments in all three novels when the text moves from a functional discourse to a 'purple prose' typically borrowed from period texts), his use of the found manuscript trope is clearly for some other purpose.¹⁵ Eco's use brings with

¹³ Capozzi, 'Palimpsests and Laughter', 425, n.5.

¹⁴ Particularly clear on this aspect of Manzoni's novel is Gregory Lucente's chapter 'The Uses and the Ends of Discourse in *I Promessi Sposi*: Witnessing the Rebirth of History's Truth' in his *Beautiful Fables: Self-consciousness in Italian Narrative from Manzoni to Calvino* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1986), pp.26-67.

¹⁵ Eco, applying the metaphor of operatic performance to narrative, confesses that 'I am not sure I ever resolved these changes of register between aria and recitative', *Postille al "Nome della rosa"* (Milan: Bompiani, 1983), translated by

it an awareness of and play with the idea of transmission of texts, in each case trying to decentralise the position of the author-as-narrator. Much the same game is played as far back as *Don Quixote*, and so we cannot feel that Eco owes this trope specifically to Manzoni.

While we may in many cases trace literary tropes in Eco's fiction back as far as the origin of the novel, the philosophical background to the work is both much more ancient and much more modern. Thomist thought, the legacy of Aristotle, and the dispute over the status of the *Corpus Hermeticum* (thought by Renaissance readers to predate the Bible until it was shown by Isaac Casaubon to derive from the third century AD) are but three of the philosophical issues highlighted in Eco's fiction. The most fundamental is, perhaps, the Cratylitic problem -- the medieval dispute over the naturalness or conventionality of language. Eco has always been interested in this dispute, and its significance for the twentieth-century crisis of referentiality, in which the sign is perceived to be not just conventional, but radically arbitrary in a manner that destabilises any attempts at fixing meaning. Artistically, this crisis is associated in the first instance with the recognition by Modernists that experience is essentially subjective.

The explosive introduction of notions of subjective reality into Italian literature came with the success of Luigi Pirandello. His play, *Così è, se vi pare*, is a parable designed to demonstrate the futility and destructiveness of attempting to determine a single, perfect truth.¹⁶ The dispute over the identity of Signor Ponzi's wife -- whether she is the daughter of Signora Frola, or a different, second wife -- egged on by the inquisitive townspeople, results only in unhappiness, the fracturing of a fictional construct of identity that had satisfied both sides. The intrusion of fictionality into reality is, of course, the theme of Pirandello's best-known work, *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore*, which opens up for Italian writers of the twentieth-century the whole field of the relationship between fiction and reality, particularly

William Weaver as *Reflections on The Name of the Rose* (London: Secker and Warburg, p.32).

¹⁶ Luigi Pirandello, *Così è, se vi pare*, in *Opere di Luigi Pirandello: Machere nude*, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 1958), translated by Arthur Livingston as *It is So (If You Think So)*, in *Naked Masks*, edited by Eric Bentley (New York: Dutton, 1952).

the way in which the relationship is typically one of illusion.¹⁷ The *neoavanguardia*'s assault on the inauthenticity of 'traditional literature', as well as Eco's subsequent attempts to renegotiate the link between reality and fiction, follow in a direct line from Pirandello's artistic ungrounding of objective reality. As Antonio Gramsci recognised, the movement in Italian art from a standard 'aristotelico-cattolico' philosophical viewpoint to the radically subjective position that would come to dominate late twentieth-century philosophy, and in which Eco is attempting to find a moderate position, is largely provoked by Pirandello.¹⁸

Pre-1945: Literature under Fascism

The writing of the early twentieth century in Italy was inevitably affected by the Fascist government, the twenty 'lost years' that led into Italy's experience of the Second World War.¹⁹ The only subtle resistance to the nationalistic promotion of an urban and industrialised Italy under Mussolini was offered by narratives of return to 'la patria', the homeland. This was itself an echo of the Romantic view of the land offered by Italian Romantic writers like Foscolo. Some of the most significant novels published under the shadow of the Fascist government were the early novels of Cesare Pavese and Elio Vittorini's *Conversazione in Sicilia*.²⁰ These offered a symbolic journey into the past, a revisitation of what Nicholas Polletta recognises as

¹⁷ Luigi Pirandello, *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore*, in *Opere di Luigi Pirandello: Machere nude*, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 1958), translated by E. Storer as *Six Characters in Search of an Author in Naked Masks*, edited by Eric Bentley (New York: Dutton, 1952).

¹⁸ Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere: Edizione critica dell'Istituto Gramsci*, edited by Valentino Gerratana, 4 vols. (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), 2:704-5, 3:1670-4.

¹⁹ See Luigi Salvatorelli and Giovanni Mira, *Storia d'Italia nel periodo fascista* (Turin: Einaudi, 1964); Ruggero Zangrandi, *Il lungo viaggio attraverso il fascismo* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1962); and Edward R. Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience: Italian Society and Culture, 1922-1945* (New York: Basic, 1972).

²⁰ Elio Vittorini, *Conversazione in Sicilia* (Milan: Bompiani, 1942).

a 'natural Eden'.²¹ We will find this tradition, and its associations of Paradisical country versus the Fallen city, resonating down into *Foucault's Pendulum*, but only after it has been filtered through the experience of war itself.²² In some respects, Italian literature appeared to be on hold, waiting, like the country itself, for liberation.

The classic literary expression of Italy's stasis at this time is Dino Buzzati's *Il deserto dei Tartari*.²³ Buzzati's indolent protagonist, Giovanni Drogo, stationed at Fort Bastiani on the edge of the Tartar desert, wastes his life away straining for a glimpse of the Tartar army, which seems always just over the horizon. In a career full of tiny acts of cowardice, he allows himself to put off any decisive action, subtly seduced by the meaningless but desolately elegant routines of military life at Bastiani. In this way, Buzzati's poetic novel addresses the issue of passivity, of missing one's opportunity to act, that is also an important theme in *Foucault's Pendulum*. It is not difficult to see elements of Drogo's nervous anticipation of the quasi-mythological enemy in Casaubon's lonely vigil at the end of Eco's novel. Casaubon waits in the house of Belbo's uncle in the Piedmont hills. Here, years earlier, the partisans had fought the fascists in the high ground around the young Belbo, just on the edge of his vision, and out of his reach. It is thus associated with the strong sense Belbo carries with him of dislocation from the historical moment, of waiting for circumstances to force him into action.

In addition to the thematic influence of *Il deserto dei Tartari*, certain images seem to resonate down into Eco's fiction. For example, the anecdote of Belbo playing his single trumpet blast at the partisan funeral contains a promise of meaning and resolution within the purity Belbo perceives in the act. This note on the trumpet is critical in the novel -- a key note, one might say -- as it symbolises the fantasy of

²¹ Nicholas V. Polletta, 'Conversazione in Sicilia: Literature of Nostalgia', *Italica* 41:4 (1964), 415-429, 428.

²² This country and city symbolism has, of course, a substantial history attached to it. See Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973). The particular association of the urban with the detective story and the paranoid will be treated later.

²³ Dino Buzzati, *Il deserto dei Tartari* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1940), translated by Stuart Hood as *The Tartar Steppe* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1952).

the absence of semiotic drift. It also echoes the sounds that help to persuade Drogo to stay at Bastiani, as 'three trumpet calls of extraordinary beauty cleft the sky'.²⁴

More immediately, although perhaps in a more pedestrian manner, the improbably dramatic outlook of the abbey in *The Name of the Rose*, with its Aedificium gothically buttressed only against a great nothingness, calls to mind the position of Fort Bastiani at the very edge of the unknown. The main influence of *Il deserto dei Tartari* is, however, on *Foucault's Pendulum*. Despite the similar sensations of temporal dislocation and infinite deferral of action, there remains a basic difference between Buzzati's novel and that of Eco, even though both rely on the motif, typical to Buzzati, of mistiming. When the Tartars finally arrive, Drogo is too old and sick to even witness the battle. Just as for Casaubon the 1968 student uprisings had occurred before he reached university, for Belbo, just as he was reaching an age at which he could become genuinely involved, the war ended.

Post-1945: The Resistance Novel²⁵

Just two months after the Liberation of Italy in 1945, the first novel about the Italian Resistance movements, Vittorini's *Uomini e no*, appeared.²⁶ Vittorini's novel centred on the partisans of Milan, an urban version of the Resistance set in a city with which Eco would come to have strong publishing connections through the

²⁴ 'Tre squilli di estrema bellezza tagliarono il cielo', *Il deserto dei Tartari*, p.84; p.62.

²⁵ For the changing political scene in post-war Italy, see particularly Giuseppe Mammarella, *L'Italia dalla caduta del fascismo a oggi*, second edition (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1978), first edition translated as *Italy after Fascism: A Political History 1943-1963* (Montreal: Casalini, 1964); Valerio Castronovo (ed.), *L'Italia contemporanea 1945-1975* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975); Norman Kogan, *A Political History of Postwar Italy: From the Old Left to the New Center-Left* (New York: Praeger, 1981); Paul Ginsburg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics 1943-1988* (London: Penguin, 1990).

²⁶ Elio Vittorini, *Uomini e no* (Milan: Bompiani, 1945).

Bompiani press. There would be, however, other works of the Resistance novel genre of more relevance to Eco's own experience.²⁷

Born in the Piedmontese city of Alessandria in 1932, Umberto Eco was too young to be actively involved in the fighting at the end of the war, but his experiences of the partisans and the fascists fighting in the Piedmont hills evidently inform the sections of *Foucault's Pendulum* that describe the youth of one of the major characters, Jacopo Belbo. Although *Foucault's Pendulum* is substantially set in the nineteen seventies and eighties, the narrative is interspersed with the reminiscences and fictional experiments of Belbo, in which his childhood memories of the partisan action in the Piedmont hills figure greatly. An editor at a Milanese publishing house, Belbo is haunted by his failure to participate in the war, and spends his time guiltily constructing fiction in secret files on his personal computer. Internal evidence indicates a birth year for Belbo similar to that of Eco, in either 1932 or 1933.²⁸ Commenting on the choice of name, Eco concedes that it was selected largely because he grew up on the River Belbo, 'where I underwent some of the ordeals that I attributed to Jacopo Belbo'.²⁹

As Eco is also forced into acknowledging (or, at least, claims to be forced into acknowledging), Belbo also echoes the Piedmontese Pavese's birthplace, Santo Stefano Belbo.³⁰ Pavese is the most important of a set of Piedmont writers who wrote about the war-time experience, and particularly the Resistance, in their own region. Critics have tended to undervalue or marginalise the segments of *Foucault's Pendulum* that deal with the childhood of Belbo, perhaps because the overt sentimentality and proud regionalism seems at odds with the arcane academic and globetrotting tomfoolery of the bulk of the novel. Another apparently legitimate

²⁷ See Giovanni Falaschi, *La resistenza armata nella narrativa italiana*, Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi 262 (Turin: Einaudi, 1976).

²⁸ 'avrò avuto cinque o sei anni [...] sarà stato il trentotto', 'I was five or six [...] it must have been '38', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.54; p.60.

²⁹ *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p.84.

³⁰ See *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p.84, where Eco also says that the character was originally called Stefano Belbo, which would have made the reference perhaps too blatant. The substitute name, Jacopo, is, it seems, a faint homage to Ugo Foscolo's *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis*.

reason for this marginalisation is the bracketing of Belbo's storytelling about his youth as self-pitying nostalgia, and the framing of his writing throughout the novel by having it constrained as literary experiments locked away in computer files, or as juvenilia squirrelled away in a cupboard, to be found by Casaubon only at the novel's conclusion. Belbo's bastardised, computerised version of creative writing, and his lack of conviction in any of his writing, is a part of the dynamic of the novel, in that it represents the pseudo-activity of the essentially passive. As such it can be taken as illustrative of the agonies and frustrations of passivity, of over-intellectualisation.

In reality, although some of Belbo's literary experiments in the novel are significant mainly for their formal effects, the pivotal story of Belbo and the trumpet, in which he finally achieves a moment of serenity playing a salute at a partisan funeral, is more than just 'the literature of memory' that Belbo himself labelled 'the last refuge of scoundrels'.³¹ Casaubon recognises it as 'il Testo Chiave',³² the Key Text, and it is given priority placement in the penultimate chapter of the novel, as the explanation of Belbo's character, but also as a repositioning of the whole novel with regard to the question of meaning. With the story of Belbo's epiphanic trumpet-playing in place, the rest of Belbo's storytelling about his youth takes on the form of a grounding myth, and the town Belbo lived in during the war becomes the novel's version of Eden.

Such an identification is helped by the way that the town is only ever referred to as '***'. This is a device self-consciously imported from the eighteenth century novel, where it is used to imply that a real place is being simultaneously indicated and masked, thus enhancing the text's claims to reality. The indicated desire to preserve the identity of the location of innocence, and by extension innocence itself, works well in *Foucault's Pendulum*, not least because the obliteration of the name strikes a dissonant note in the broad intellectual comedy surrounding it. The characterisation of the town as Edenic is a more successful version of the attempt to perform much the same trick with the identity of the abbey in *The Name of the Rose*, with Adso introducing it as 'the abbey whose name it is only right and proper now

³¹ 'La letteratura di memoria, lo sapeva anche lui che era l'ultimo rifugio delle canaglie', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.495; p.625.

³² *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.495; p.625.

to omit'.³³ Even with Adso revisiting the ruins at the end of the novel to recapture the prelapsarian pristinity of the abbey of his youth, a journey that also can be taken as a Pavese-style return home, the Edenic identification is baffled by the analogic overidentification in the novel that has the abbey also offering itself as a microcosm of the city, the church, and even of Europe.

Aside from this limitation, the masking of the abbey's identity is required simply to retain a level of plausibility for Eco's interjection into history. If a preliminary debate on Christ's poverty between Michael of Cesena and a Papal legation took place nowhere in Italy, then the Italian abbey at which it took place had best be located nowhere too specific. This logic marks the location of the abbey, like the location of Belbo's town, as an instance of the basic semiotic drift prevalent in the novels, such that the concrete referent, the real home, is always unreachable. This too is a trope that can be witnessed operating throughout the Italian Resistance novel. The optimism of Liberation, the hope for political change that is typically expressed, is balanced by an awareness that the land of childhood innocence has gone. The landscape may be the same, but the meaning has changed for the Italian revisiting his youth. This is the case whether it is a partisan struggling to readjust from the wartime rules of engagement to the re-established rule of order, as in Carlo Cassola's *La ragazza di Bube*, or the typical Pavese protagonist leaving behind the mysterious relationships of the big city or America to reconnect with the cruder patterns of life in the Piedmont hills, as in his classic *La luna e i falò*.³⁴

Eco, apart from his own autobiographical experiences of wartime Piedmont, can lean on a set of novels that, like *La luna e i falò*, cast the Piedmont hills as the location of unrecoverable Paradise. Giovanne Arpino's *L'ombra delle colline* (winner of the Strega prize in 1964) follows the pattern of Pavese's novel in having a young intellectual travel back to Piedmont from Rome in order to rediscover himself among

³³ 'all'abbazia di cui è bene e pio si taccia ormai anche il nome', *The Name of the Rose*, p.19 ; p.11.

³⁴ Carlo Cassola, *La ragazza di Bube* (Turin: Einaudi, 1960), translated by Marguerite Waldman as *Bebo's Girl* (London: Collins, 1962); Cesare Pavese, *La luna e i falò* (Turin: Einaudi, 1950), translated by Louise Sinclair as *The Moon and the Bonfire* (London: Owen, 1952).

the hills both of his youth, and of the partisan fighting in the war.³⁵ In a pleasantly meaningless coincidence, the protagonist Stefano encounters a Colonel Illuminati, whose name combines *Foucault's Pendulum's* Colonel Ardeni with the Illuminati, who come second only to the Templars in paranoid mythology. Finally, there is the Piedmontese Beppe Fenoglio, whose accounts of the partisan activity in the hills Italo Calvino felt brought the Resistance novel to its final, perfected vision. In Fenoglio's unfinished *Una questione privata* Calvino saw the classic expression of the basic semiotic drift encapsulated in the pursuit of the Edenic.³⁶ This is the Golden Age that Raymond Williams noted, rather like Buzzati's Tartar army, is 'just back, we can see, over the last hill':³⁷

Ed è un libro assurdo, misterioso, in cui ciò che si insegna, si insegna per inseguire altro, e quest'altro per inseguire altro ancora e non si arriva al vero perché.

It is an absurd, mysterious book, in which the object of pursuit is only pursued in order to pursue something else, and this something else is in turn only pursued for the sake of something else again, and we never reach the ultimate goal.³⁸

For many of those engaged in memorialising the Resistance and the regions in which they fought, this pursuit of the unattainable also had a specific political resonance. The overlap of the Resistance with Communist groups had been significant, and in the immediate post-war climate there was an understandable feeling that real social change was within reach. The development of a neo-realist style, in part harking back to Giovanni Verga's Naturalistic *I Malavoglia*, as well as Vittorini and Pavese, did much to answer the influential call for a national popular

³⁵ Giovanni Arpino, *L'ombra delle colline* (Milan: Mondadori, 1963).

³⁶ Beppe Fenoglio, *Una questione privata* (Milan: Garzanti, 1965).

³⁷ *The Country and the City*, p.9. Williams hardly needs to point out that what lies over the last hill is indeed Eden. Ibid, p.12.

³⁸ Italo Calvino, Preface to *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno*, new edition with a preface by the author (Turin: Einaudi, 1964), p.22, translated by Martin McLaughlin as *The Path to the Spiders' Nests* (London: Cape, 1998), pp.27-8.

literature made in the posthumously published writings of Antonio Gramsci.³⁹ Even writers who would later find success with fiction of a quite different order started under the auspices of the neo-realist movement.⁴⁰ Hence, Leonardo Sciascia, whose application of the detective story to Italian culture is, as we will see, important to an understanding of Eco's novels, begins with the Verga-influenced *Le parrocchie di Regalpetra*.⁴¹ Similarly, the works with which Italo Calvino made his name, the novel *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno*, and the collection of short stories, *Ultimo viene il corvo*, are some of the earliest and best known of the Resistance narratives.⁴²

The artistic and political constraints of neo-realism would eventually become too much for many writers, leaving it as 'the terrain of Stalinist critics who would sustain the most banal realism as a bulwark against what they saw as literary decadence, irrespective of the fact that a genuine commitment to popular causes was frequently slipping into no more than sentimental populism'.⁴³ The situation for left-wing writers was not helped by the Communist Party's strategy of mainstreaming itself, which brought it into the post-war government of reconstruction, making it difficult to adopt a distinct non-Communist position on the left. In his preface to *Le parrocchie di Regalpetra* Sciascia complained:

pare che in Italia basta ci si affacci a parlare il linguaggio della ragione per essere accusati di mettere la bandiera rossa alla finestra.

³⁹ Antonio Gramsci, *Gli intellettuali e l'organizzazione della cultura* (Turin: Einaudi, 1949), and *Letteratura e vita nazionale* (Turin: Einaudi, 1950).

⁴⁰ See particularly Italo Calvino, 'Main Currents in Italian Fiction Today', *Italian Quarterly* 4, Nos. 13-14 (1950), 3-14; Dante Della Terza, 'The Neorealists and the Form of the Novel', *Italian Quarterly* 10 (1966), 3-20; Dominique Fernandez, *Le roman italien et la crise de la conscience moderne* (Paris: Grasset, 1958); and for a descriptive overview Sergio Pacifici's, *A Guide to Contemporary Italian Literature: from Futurism to Neorealism* (New York: Meridian, 1962).

⁴¹ Leonardo Sciascia, *Le parrocchie di Regalpetra* (Bari: Laterza, 1956), translated by J. Green as *Salt in the Wound* (with *The Death of the Inquisitor*) (New York: Orion, 1969).

⁴² Italo Calvino, *Ultimo viene il corvo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1949).

⁴³ Michael Caesar and Peter Hainsworth, 'The Transformation of Post-War Italy', in *Writers & Society in Contemporary Italy*, p.29.

it seems that in Italy it is enough to appear to talk the language of reason to be accused of dangling the red flag out of your window.⁴⁴

Instead of the revolutionary change that the Communist-led Resistance had expected would follow the Liberation as a matter of course there was the absorption of the Communist Party into the existing political system, and the reinstatement of most of the elements of the bourgeois establishment. Neo-realism, the dominant artistic expression of the post-war period until the end of the nineteen-fifties, closed off many of the possibilities of formal innovation that, for example, Italo Calvino would find so fascinating in his later writing. The movement of Calvino's artistic stance from neo-realism to his own brand of the fantastic is one that is significant in terms of Italian literature in general. It is instructive to look at Calvino as a writer who, though he published his first novel more than thirty years before Eco published *The Name of the Rose*, was in fact just half a generation older than Eco.⁴⁵ In his classic of the Resistance, *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno*, Calvino chooses as his protagonist a young boy, Pin, who shares with other protagonists of the Resistance novel the drive to locate an Eden as the teleological end of the war, an 'enchanted land where all the inhabitants were good'.⁴⁶ Pin is too young to understand the complexities of the war and too young to fight. Calvino's decision allows him to defamiliarise the already mythologised partisan groups, to see them fresh, with outsider's eyes. Pin would be about the same age as Eco, and his alter-ego, Jacopo Belbo. However, Belbo is not a means for Eco to introduce the reader to the partisans, he is a way to talk about missing out, being and feeling marginal.

This marginality, this disabling sense of untimeliness, belongs not just to Belbo but also to the novel's narrator, Casaubon:

Iniziare l'università due anni dopo il sessantotto è come essere ammesso all'Accademia di Saint-Cyr nel novantatré. Si ha l'impressione di avere sbagliato anno di nascita.

⁴⁴ *Le parrocchie di Regalpetra*, p.11. My translation.

⁴⁵ Calvino was born just nine years before Eco, in 1923.

⁴⁶ 'un paese incantato in cui tutti siano buoni', *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno*, p.167; p.159.

To attend university a couple of years after 1968 was like being admitted to the Academy of Saint-Cyr in 1793. One had the feeling of having been born in the wrong year.⁴⁷

Given that Casaubon is apparently not quite fifteen years *younger* than Belbo, this would make him about twenty-three when entering university, so perhaps he really was born in the wrong year. Whatever the case, Belbo and Casaubon frame between them two of the most significant twentieth-century events in Italy -- the Liberation and the 1968 uprisings. We will examine the latter in due course, but it is worth observing that there is a clear doubling occurring here. The paradisaical time of the Resistance is analogous to the potential end (also potential beginning) of history represented by revolution, as Casaubon finds himself 'in the midst of the Revolution, or at least in the most stupendous imitation of it'.⁴⁸

The doubling of this nostalgia for the unattainable, the notion of an Edenic past so strongly expressed in neo-realist literature, is itself doubled in *Foucault's Pendulum* by reference to the two moments of revolutionary potential in 1945 and 1968. As we will see, this double disappointment, requiring the two protagonists, Belbo and Casaubon, almost a generation apart, to be presented within the novel, is a reflection of Eco's highly unusual position of being close, but not close enough, to both events. Embedded in Eco's response to the partisan experience that he barely missed is a nostalgia for the first and most positive form of conspiracy that occurs in his fiction. As we will see, conspiracies are for Eco typically paranoid and reactionary. However, behind them all, and perhaps behind Eco's desire to address, or to chase, conspiracy at all, is the noble conspiracy of the anti-Fascist Resistance, with its unity of purpose, coherent aims, and idealised moral universe.

This childhood influence, we may note, is one that emerges into Eco's semiotic work (primarily in *The Limits of Interpretation* and *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*) only after he has started writing novels.⁴⁹ As he emerged onto

⁴⁷ *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.47; p.49, my translation.

⁴⁸ 'Mi trovai in mezzo alla Rivoluzione, o almeno alla più stupenda simulazione', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.48; p.50.

⁴⁹ Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

the academic and literary scene in the early nineteen-sixties, Eco was most definitely influenced by, as well as himself influencing, the radical reactions to the perceived straightjacket of neo-realism. The result was a highly acclaimed, and very media-friendly, *neo-avanguardia*, primarily the polemical assembly of writers calling itself the *Gruppo 63*.

The 1960s: *La neo-avanguardia*

The publication in 1956 of Eco's thesis on the problem of identifying a coherent aesthetic system in the writing in Thomas Aquinas had an understandably tiny impact on the world at large. It turned out not to be representative of the reception of Eco's writings in future. A clearer marker may be taken from the pamphlet he pseudonymously published in 1958, *Filosofi in libertà*, which contained fifteen comic-strip skits on major philosophers throughout history.⁵⁰ Without wishing to read too much into a small publication, many aspects of Eco's developing interests can be identified within, such as the identification with Joyce (in the pseudonym 'Dedalus'), and the eager blending of academic content with popular form. While Peter Bondanella reasonably reads the comic-strips, with their punning allusions to the philosophers, as an early instance of Eco wishing 'to make truth laugh' (as the conclusion of *The Name of the Rose* has it), it is the form as much as anything else that is of interest.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Umberto Eco ['Dedalus'], *Filosofi in libertà* (Turin: Taylor, 1958).

⁵¹ Bondanella, p.18. William of Baskerville's words, the climax of his summatory speech, are worth quoting at greater length:

Forse il compito di chi ama gli uomini è di far ridere della verità, *fare ridere la verità*, perché l'unica verità è imparare a liberarci dalla passione insana per la verità.

Perhaps the mission of those who love mankind is to make people laugh at the truth, *to make truth laugh*, because the only truth lies in learning to free ourselves from insane passion for the truth.

-- *The Name of the Rose*, p.494; p.491.

The comic-strip, of which Eco is a well-known fan, is almost completely an artifact of popular culture. In those essays where Eco deals with comic-strips the polemical edge of bringing 'high cultural' semiotics to 'low culture' is unmistakable. Robert Lumley, noting that Eco comes from a generation before international mass culture was a pervasive influence, rightly argues that this places him in a position where he can both recognise the distance between high and low culture, and influence it. For Eco, says Lumley, 'the real provocation, and pleasure, lies in rescuing works like Schulz's cartoons [...] and elevating them to the status of 'Art'.⁵²

Eco's next book, *Opera aperta*, dealt more directly with aesthetic questions, and without adopting any kind of populist stance. Indeed, the subjects are noticeably avant-garde. Eco gives a selection of composers -- Stockhausen, Berio, Pousseur, Boulez -- who have produced instrumental works that Eco defines as 'open works', 'which are brought to their conclusion by the performer at the same time as he experiences them on an aesthetic plane'.⁵³ The great literary example used is James Joyce, a choice that says much about Eco's attitude toward popular culture. Like Joyce, Eco would always be a close and interested observer of popular culture.⁵⁴ However, Eco's novels borrow liberally the structures of popular literature -- the detective story, the adventure story, the pseudo-historical New Age quest (as seen in innumerable books claiming to have penetrated the secrets of the Templars or the pyramids). It is difficult to imagine anything further removed from the narcotising consolations of a traditional detective story than *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake*. Eco illustrates the problem best in his parodically Joycean reading of *I promessi sposi*, the point of which is the incommensurability of the two artistic positions. Nevertheless, the early sixties found Italian culture more prepared to listen to such self-indulgent, highly aestheticised pleasures as offered by Joyce. Eco's *Opera aperta*

⁵² Robert Lumley, 'Introduction', in Umberto Eco, *Apocalypse Postponed*, edited by Robert Lumley (London: Flamingo, 1995), p.11. This book is based on *Apocalittici e integrati: comunicazione di massa e teoria della cultura di massa* (Milan: Bompiani, 1964).

⁵³ *The Open Work*, p.3.

⁵⁴ Eco's collection *Misreadings* uses as its epigraph Joyce's comment, 'Music-hall, not poetry, is a criticism of life'.

was one of the clearest indications of a movement away from the consciously simplistic narrative structures of neo-realism towards more obscure, more self-consciously 'artistic' forms, such as had characterised Modernism. Eco's book was part of a new avant-gardist wave -- *la neoavanguardia* -- that became formalised in 1963 in the meetings and publications of the *Gruppo 63*.⁵⁵

The *neoavanguardia* was in part inspired by artistic movements outside Italy, particularly the French *nouveau roman*. The relevance of Alain Robbe-Grillet's manipulations of the form of the detective story to *Foucault's Pendulum* in particular will be dealt with in its place, but there were more immediate reactions to the *nouveau roman*. In 1961 Eco published a reverent parody of Robbe-Grillet's style, 'Esquisse d'un nouveau chat', which concentrates on its subject's formal experimentation, disruption of straightforward narrative flow, and concentration on the absolute materiality of objects.⁵⁶ Another indicative publication in 1961 was Raffaele La Capria's novel *Ferito a morte*.⁵⁷ Furio Sampoli observes that 'as soon as *Ferito a morte* came out, many critics said that the book was an imitation of the French novel from Butor to Robbe-Grillet, with intelligent recollections of the Joycean lesson of Ulysses'.⁵⁸ La Capria had started out as being decidedly influenced by the *nouveau roman*, to the extent of plotting out a novel without a plot, but had found it necessary to return to a more traditional structure informed by a clear progression on the part of the protagonist. What is very significant, however,

⁵⁵ The official *Gruppo 63* publications were *Gruppo 63*, edited by Nanni Balestrini and Alfredo Giuliani (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1964), and *Gruppo 63; Il romanzo sperimentale* edited by Nanni Balestrini (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1966). Aside from these, see also Renato Barilli and Angelo Guglielmi, *Gruppo 63. Critica e teoria* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1976); Renato Barilli, *La neoavanguardia italiana: dalla nascita del «Verri» alla fine di «Quindici»* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995); R. Esposito, *Le ideologie della neo-avanguardia* (Naples: Liguori, 1976); the collection edited by Sergio Pacifici, *From Verismo to Experimentalism: Essays in the Modern Italian Novel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969); and for a more detached view, Walter Pedullà's essays 'L'arresto dell'avanguardia', in *La rivoluzione della letteratura*, second edition (Rome: Bulzoni, 1972), pp.93-150.

⁵⁶ Umberto Eco, 'Esquisse d'un nouveau chat', in *Misreadings*, pp.47-52.

⁵⁷ Raffaele La Capria, *Ferito a morte* (Milan: Bompiani, 1960).

⁵⁸ Furio Sampoli, 'The Italian Novel of Recent Years', *Italian Quarterly* 7:26 (1963), 16-32, 29.

is the device used by La Capria in an attempt to catch what he saw as the language and the timelessness of Naples. Sampoli, as a friend was privy to the construction of the novel:

Before beginning the first draft of *Ferito a morte*, La Capria had filled a couple of hundred little cards with dialogues, monologues, minute descriptions of the various hours of the day, of the changing of the light, of the color of the sea, of underwater fishing.⁵⁹

It is no surprise to see a novel constructed from these elements compared to the *nouveau roman*. All the same, La Capria's is an understandable tactic in that the little cards are building up a discourse, a means of displaying the Neapolitan landscape, but for our purposes the interest is that we are starting to see in place of the increasingly kitsch effects offered by neo-realism in its later stages, a genuinely avant-garde concern with the work of art in its moment of creation rather than its moment of consumption. In an essay on kitsch published in his 1964 book *Apocalittici e integrati*, Eco approvingly paraphrases Clement Greenberg's definition: 'If the avant-garde imitates the processes of art, kitsch, we now see, imitates its effects'.⁶⁰ In La Capria we see a foreshadowing of the cut-up techniques to be used by *Gruppo 63* writers such as Sanguineti, Nanni Balestrini and Antonio Porta. When we observe Eco utilising much the same set of techniques -- cut-up, combinatory quotation, juxtaposing different types of source material -- in his fairly orthodox-looking narratives, it is valid to ask whether the dominant idea is that of an avant-gardist exploration of the meanings created between objects in the modern world, or whether, as with La Capria, it is simply a convenient way for the writer to ease himself into a difficult and unfamiliar narrative form.

Of course, Eco's support in the early sixties for the neo-avant-gardist position has already been seen in *Opera aperta*. There Eco essentially argues that form is the content of the neo-avant-gardist work, and that the open work is the most interesting new model for art. Formal innovation, particularly the demand for the interaction of

⁵⁹ Sampoli, p.30.

⁶⁰ Umberto Eco, 'The Structure of Bad Taste', in *The Open Work*, p.186, referring to Clement Greenberg, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon, 1961), p.15.

the audience is paramount. This effectively describes the poetry of Edoardo Sanguineti, also a member of *Gruppo 63* (seen sitting next to Eco in one of the photographs in *Gruppo 63; Il romanzo sperimentale*).⁶¹ Sanguineti's poetry has similarities with both the poetry of Pound and Eliot, as well as the blending of discourses that Joyce achieves in *Ulysses*.⁶² There are large sections of poetry with no distinct metre, ranging across several different languages and discourses, with images and ideas formed by repetition and modification rather than through straight exposition. Furthermore, the linguistic system that Sanguineti is attempting to develop is one based on myth -- making his poetry look a very Modernist enterprise. Sanguineti uses an adaptation of Saussure's structuralist linguistics and Freudian dream interpretation to build a language of mythemes that he believes is purer than the ideologically tainted language of neo-capitalist Italy, and therefore capable of undercutting it.⁶³

Sanguineti's first novel, *Capriccio italiano*, is perhaps the quintessential neo-avant-garde work.⁶⁴ The repetitive, neutral tone is combined with an apparent randomness in much of the syntax. This is matched by the manner in which characters, usually identified solely by a letter, seem to shift and change through the course of the novel. The reader is left with the feeling that the text is constructed from radically different elements joined with a deliberate roughness -- a spliced-together series of visions populated by a deliberately mutable cast, very much in the manner of Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* or *Nova Express*. Sanguineti's method of construction becomes clearer in his 1967 novel, *Il giuoco dell'oca*.⁶⁵ Where *Capriccio italiano* had one hundred and eleven chapters, *Il giuoco dell'oca* ('The Goose Game') consists of the same number of 'boxes' -- squares on the board of the Goose Game. Each section of text describes one box, offering no interpretation, only

⁶¹ *Gruppo 63; Il romanzo sperimentale*, p.7.

⁶² See Edoardo Sanguineti, *Catamerone 1951-1971* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1974).

⁶³ On Sanguineti's place within the neo-avant-garde, see particularly Christopher Wagstaff, 'The Neo-avantgarde', Chapter Two in *Writers & Society in Contemporary Italy*, pp.35-61.

⁶⁴ Edoardo Sanguineti, *Capriccio italiano* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1963).

⁶⁵ Edoardo Sanguineti, *Il giuoco dell'oca* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1967).

a rush of words, images, cultural artifacts. What is new is that Sanguineti provides on the endpapers of the novel a picture of the hand-drawn game board from which he derives the text. The reader can peer at each little square, trying to identify the newspaper clippings, comic-strip images, diagrams, maps, advertisements, slogans and photographs from which they are constructed. The similarity to William Burroughs' notebooks, in which fragments of typed text vie for space with photos, newspaper print, and scrawled handwriting, is remarkable.⁶⁶ It is likely, however, that the novel was designed more as a written parallel to the Pop Art movement, akin to the *nouveau nouveau roman* (*Tel Quel*), with many of the boxes having a more than passing resemblance to the work of Roy Lichtenstein.

We might place alongside Sanguineti's writing the work of Antonio Porta, another member of the *Gruppo 63*, whose method Eco tellingly identifies as a 'scissoring-up'.⁶⁷ The phrase reminds us that the *Gruppo 63* had connections, whether enunciated at the time or not, with other forms of neo-avant-garde outside Italy. Both Sanguineti's spliced discourses and Porta's 'scissoring-up' are methodologically akin, for instance, to William Burroughs' notorious 'cut-up technique', formulated most forcefully in Burroughs and Brion Gysin's *The Third Mind*.⁶⁸

The most evidently Burroughs-like cut-up project is actually that of Nanni Balestrini, who, as the editor of the *Gruppo 63* anthologies as well as the associated journals *Il Verri* and *Quindici*, was the central figure of the *Gruppo 63*. His novel, *Tristano*, uses some of the same devices as those of Sanguineti. For instance, all proper names are replaced with the letter C throughout.⁶⁹ Also as in Sanguineti's novels, the organisation of the book is mathematically controlled, albeit according to formulae obscure to the reader, with ten paragraphs of thirty-four lines each forming each of the ten chapters. The whole novel, as Wagstaff felicitously describes

⁶⁶ Sample pages from Burroughs' notebooks can be found in the collection, *The Burroughs File* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1984).

⁶⁷ *The Open Work*, p.244.

⁶⁸ William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin, *The Third Mind* (London: John Calder, 1979).

⁶⁹ Nanni Balestrini, *Tristano* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1966).

it, 'is a scissors and paste job: he has taken sentences from novels of romance on the one hand, and technical handbooks on the other. No 'meaning' is really intended'.⁷⁰

'Meaning' here, can be put in opposition to information, in the terms of the information theory that had so influenced Eco around the time of *Opera aperta*.⁷¹ Balestrini's novel has high information content because of its unpredictability. At the same time, it has little meaning because it doesn't fit any of the conventionalised genres, the meanings of which we have grown to understand. Instantly, we can see that some thirty years later Eco has rejected the lop-sided avant-gardist promotion of information over meaning by choosing to write novels that are generically highly determined, and therefore high in meaning.

Now, with this as a background it is worthwhile considering what Eco is doing later with his novels. Form in his novels is really not the content, in the sense that it can be for the true Italian *neo-avanguardista*. The forms that Eco chooses are not the challenging, information-rich ones developed by Sanguineti and Balestrini, or even Burroughs, and behind them, James Joyce. Eco relies instead on recognisable ('meaningful') generic forms -- primarily the detective story -- that allow the reader to feel some level of security with the progressive unfolding of the texts. Without being overtly challenged on the level of form, the reader can expend more effort in addressing the data being presented as content.

Of course, the situation is never as clear-cut as the definitions would suggest. Form and content are inextricably linked, and Eco's use of the form of the detective narrative, as I will show, is far from naïve. Talking of form as though the novel had a shape that was immediately and immutably apparent to the reader is palpably false. The experience of form is modified through the reading of the novel, which is what gives Eco the room to produce novels that are at once detective narratives and commentaries on detective narratives. Form, then, can represent a modification of content, something against which the content must be read.

Where does this leave the avantgardist art that Eco had been supporting in the sixties? The writing of Balestrini, and particularly the mythopoeic Sanguineti, starts to look like the Diabolical thought-streams and manuscripts in *Foucault's Pendulum*.

⁷⁰ *Writers & Society in Contemporary Italy*, p.46.

⁷¹ See especially Chapter Three, 'Openness, Information, Communication', in *The Open Work*, pp.44-83.

The emphasis on an underlying secret, a true myth, the belief that somehow by performing a cut-up of history, language, or whatever, we can arrive at a deeper truth about the world is common to Sanguineti and the Diabolicals.

The cutting-up of external sources and techniques of recombining them is of defining importance in the legacy of the neo-avantgarde within Eco's fiction. All three novels certainly look as though they have been substantially constructed from other texts, and Eco himself seems keen to provide information about the writing process that confirms this. With regard to the central passage in *The Name of the Rose* where Adso makes love with the nameless girl, Eco explains how he set himself amongst all of the books, photocopies and file cards he considered relevant to the scene:

So, as I was writing, I had at my elbow all the texts, flung in no order; and my eye would fall first on this one and then on that, as I copied out a passage, immediately linking it to another.⁷²

This intertextual technique appears to have been refined by the time Eco comes to write *The Island of the Day Before*, about which he tells an interviewer that 'I wrote down hundreds of poetic images, minus the author's name, on little slips of paper, so that they would enter into the creative flow at the right moment'.⁷³ In fact, by this stage the compositional technique Eco uses for parts of the novel, such as the letters of the protagonist Robert della Griva, seems to have become associated with the computer imagery in *Foucault's Pendulum*, for he has to assert that 'I didn't generate them with a computer program'.⁷⁴

In fact, the notion of using computer-ordered data in art is a powerful one for avant-gardist writers. Eco sees it, in principle, as a model for the later work of Joyce:

In point of fact, *Finnegans Wake* is an example of a categorical index put into practice, a sort of computer which has received the input of

⁷² *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, p.45.

⁷³ Interview with Lee Marshall, *European* 7 October 1994, *Élan*, p.12.

⁷⁴ Interview with Lee Marshall, p.12.

all available knowledge and which returns an output of new connections effected among the various elements of this knowledge.⁷⁵

Eco might be thinking here of some of Balestrini's poetic experiments, a development of the typographically-ordered assemblages that dominated his work in the mid-sixties, attempting to deconstruct the language of neo-capitalism.⁷⁶ Amongst other methods of composition, according to Wagstaff, Balestrini uses 'a computer to assemble the collage according to principles which he enters into the machine at the outset'.⁷⁷ It is significant that Wagstaff finds Balestrini not only the most radical poet of the *Gruppo 63*, but also the closest to producing the art indicated by Eco's *Opera aperta*. Balestrini was not producing disorder through irrationality as Sanguineti and Alfredo Giuliani would. As Eco says, 'he does not create disorder by upsetting an order but rather discovers this disorder in place of order'.⁷⁸

It is important to recognise then, that when we watch Casaubon in *Foucault's Pendulum* write a computer program to list all seven hundred and twenty possible names of God, and the results are printed in the novel, looking something like one of Aleister Crowley's invocations, he is actually performing a recombinatory artistic operation that was familiar to avant-garde writers of the sixties. Eco is fascinated by the manner in which the most ancient and mystical literary traditions, in this case the cabbalistic art of textual permutation, temurah, is formally almost indistinguishable from the most radical avant-garde literary experiments. The sacred exploration of all possible combinations of 'Iahveh' becomes no different to one of Burroughs' unquestionably profane exercises, such as a satire on nuclear brinkmanship designed to illustrate the temurah in cold war rhetoric:

I am right. you are wrong.
. " * : + @
you are wrong. I am right.
: + @ . " *

⁷⁵ Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation*, p.147.

⁷⁶ See Nanni Balestrini, *Ma noi facciamone un'altra* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1968).

⁷⁷ *Writers & Society in Contemporary Italy*, p.48.

⁷⁸ *The Open Work*, p.268.

I am right? you are wrong.
 . " * : + @
 you are wrong? I am right.
 : + @ . " *⁷⁹

The link to the avant-garde is made clear when the protagonists in *Foucault's Pendulum* hit upon the use of the computer to generate random links for their burgeoning ironic fantasy, which they name the Plan. Belbo gleefully reports that the computer has a program primed to produce avant-gardist poetry:

Il programma le chiede di quanti versi dev'essere lunga la poesia, e lei decide, dieci, venti, cento. Poi il programma trae dall'orologio interno del computer il numero dei secondi, e lo randomizza, in parole povere ne trae una formula di combinazione sempre nuova. Con dieci versi può ottenere migliaia e migliaia di poesie casuali.

The program asks you how many lines you want in the poem, and you decide, ten, twenty, a hundred. Then the program takes the time from the computer's internal clock, and randomizes it, in short it gets from it a new way of arranging the lines. With ten lines you can get thousands and thousands of random poems.⁸⁰

It takes only a few examples that Belbo constructs from borrowed lines to confirm that the result is poetry only in the broadest sense. In fact, the results most resemble a collage constructed by Walter Killy from six German authors (including Rilke) to demonstrate the characteristics of kitsch.⁸¹ Eco quotes Killy's pastiche in his essay on kitsch, and it is evident that he regards the automation of the artistic process as liable to result in kitsch. We should be careful, however, of reading this as a retrospective condemnation by Eco of his fellow travellers in the sixties.⁸²

⁷⁹ *The Burroughs File*, p.102.

⁸⁰ *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.297; p.374, my translation.

⁸¹ Walter Killy, *Deutscher Kitsch* (Göttingen: Vandenhocht & Riprecht, 1962).

⁸² There is, of course, the question of whether *Foucault's Pendulum* itself is kitsch, as Salman Rushdie, among others, would argue (see Salman Rushdie, 'Umberto Eco', in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Granta, 1991), pp.269-72). Although I will not address the issue directly, my analysis of Eco's ironic uses of his sources assumes that he invests them with fresh artistic intention frequently enough to avoid the charge. For further discussion see

For one thing, Balestrini aside, the *neo-avanguardia* were not able to access the labour-saving possibilities of modern computers. The cut-ups and random concoctions, so easy to achieve on computer, were still being constructed by the hand of the artist. One need only look at the laboriously hand-drawn game board in Sanguineti's *Il giuoco dell'oca* to realise that these literary experiments, far from cutting out the author, spliced him into the texts he borrowed to make his own. The arrival of computers onto the scene in *Foucault's Pendulum* enables the protagonists to proceed with their ludic combinations of history, but they are not thinking of art, they are only interested in producing kitsch in the first place -- a pastiche of the Diabolical theories that they are bored with reading. The computer only inspires the frustrated Belbo to try his hand at creative writing, and provides just the illusion of productive writing, files full of kitsch, for someone who we are told wrote 'with the bitter obstinacy of a man who knows that his efforts are doomed to failure'.⁸³ The short-cuts provided by the computer's subroutines allow Belbo to produce in bad faith simulacra of avant-garde art.

Diotalleivi, who stands for the Jewish tradition of cabbalistic thought in *Foucault's Pendulum*, makes his complaints against Belbo's behaviour very much along these lines. When the computer, which Belbo in due course names Abulafia after the Talmudic scholar, arrives in the office, Diotallevi immediately objects to the possibilities it offers for recombining texts in a cabbalistic manner. He insists that 'the important thing is not the finding, it is the seeking, it is the devotion with which one spins the wheel of prayer and scripture, discovering the truth little by little'.⁸⁴ The objection is apparently vindicated at the end of the novel in the extraordinary circumstances of Diotallevi's death from cancer. When Belbo last visits his friend in hospital, Diotallevi likens the manic combinations that the Editors produced in the Plan with the behaviour of his cancerous cells, which 'have learned that you can

Rocco Capozzi, 'Il pendolo di Foucault: Kitsch o neo/post-moderno', *Quaderni d'Italianistica* 2 (1990), 225-37.

⁸³ 'col puntiglio amaro di chi le sa già votate all'insuccesso', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.42; p.43.

⁸⁴ 'Ma non è il risultato quello che conta. È il processo, la fedeltà con cui farai girare all'infinito il mulino della preghiera e della scrittura, scoprendo la verità a poco a poco', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.34; p.33.

blaspheme by anagrammatizing the Book'.⁸⁵ He identifies the computer-aided designs of the Editors with the meaningless transmutations of the cancer cells, in that they both 'joke, without faith, blindly'.⁸⁶

If *Foucault's Pendulum*, a novel that is very much concerned with questions of sincerity in creativity, has suspicions about the effects of automation, then this is something that can in itself be seen to arise from the neo-avant-garde. In his essay, 'The Death of the *Gruppo 63*', Eco argues for a real difference between the avant-garde and neo-avant-garde partly on the basis of their attitudes towards technology:

A close attention to the world of technology has been a constant feature of this neo-avant-garde, just as it had been of the historical avant-garde. However, if the historical avant-garde had seen the use of technical and machine imagery in terms of a symbol of hope, from the Italian Futurists to Russian Futurism, the *Gruppo 63* found its meeting with the world of technology (never unequivocal in this kind of love-hate dialectic) positively ironic.⁸⁷

Eco seems to recognise in this that one way of defining the activities of the *Gruppo 63* is in terms of their ironic stance towards parts of their own legacy as a neo-avant-garde group, something that is implicit even in the peculiarity of the label 'neo-avant-garde'. Obviously, there is a tension between the conceptualisation of avant-garde as an artistic position, and as a historical movement. Any attempt at reviving the avant-garde must then involve a distance from the historical positions of the avant-garde, and this distance comes in the form of irony.

The relation to the historical avant-garde aside, one of the most significant ironic patterns in writers of the *neo-avanguardia*, is in relation to popular culture. As already mentioned, Eco makes heavy use of the formulae of genre fiction in a manner that was anathema to the *Gruppo 63*. However, while the structures of popular fiction were stigmatised, there was no such refusal to use the discourse and

⁸⁵ 'Le mie cellule hanno ormai imparato che si può bestemmiare anagrammando il Libro', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.447; p.566.

⁸⁶ 'Ma loro giocano, senza fede, alla cieca', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.447; p.566.

⁸⁷ Umberto Eco, 'The Death of the *Gruppo 63*', originally published in *Twentieth Century Studies* 5 (Sept 1971), 60-71, Chapter Eleven in *The Open Work*, pp.236-49, p.244.

content of popular forms. Writers of the *neo-avanguardia* such as Sanguineti and Balestrini used intertextual strategies of plundering the language and iconography of neo-capitalist cultures, making ironic juxtapositions of them, in an attempt to address the underlying problems of contemporary Italy. It is at this point that we can recognise a real basis to the formal analogy that Eco observes between the neo-avant-garde techniques of cut and splice, and the cabbalists' temurah. The discipline of temurah teaches that thoughtful recombinations of the divine word, the Torah (i.e. the first five books of the Old Testament), can lead to deeper truths. In the same way, the neo-avant-garde writers believed that a process of recombining elements from popular elements is perhaps the only valid way of reaching the underlying truths about the world from which they spring.

Beyond his observation of this connection, it is not always clear where Eco stands in relation to this belief. Indeed, the persistence with which Eco uses the technique of combining sources in his novels suggests that he takes it as the best available method of recalling a world that has passed into history -- with *Foucault's Pendulum* mainly set in the nineteen seventies, all three of the novels are essentially historical. What is not clear is the status of these reconstituted worlds. As we will see in later chapters, Eco retains a great deal of play in the novels between their fictionality and their claims to reality, and is not about to be caught out claiming that he has captured the real essence of anything. His scepticism of the relevance of the cut-up technique beyond its specific moment in the historical avant-garde is the determining factor here. In distancing himself from the reliance of the *Gruppo 63* on such methods, he relates how, in 1965, he observed that already neo-avant-garde anti-narratives constructed through cut and paste juxtapositions were shocking only in ways anticipated, and therefore enjoyed, by audiences. Eco is mounting a defence for his recycling of avant-garde methods in generically 'safe' narrative forms by pointing out that this is what had already happened:

Avant-garde was becoming tradition: what had been dissonance a few years before was turning into a balm for the ears (or for the eyes). And from this observation only one conclusion could be drawn: unacceptability of the message was no longer the prime criterion for

an experimental fiction (or any other art), since unacceptability had now been codified as entertaining.⁸⁸

The other side of the case is that, unlike many neo-avant-garde writers, Eco genuinely enjoys mass culture. It is this that makes the experiments of William Burroughs, that openly relish the low-cultural milieu in which they operate, a more appropriate comparison to Eco's work than the works of the Italian neo-avant-garde, which, in using popular sources, frequently also sought to condemn them.

Eco's 1964 book, *Apocalittici e integrati*, centres on the question raised in this contrast in intellectual responses to mass culture. He determines the two poles of reaction as the apocalyptic -- the idea that mass culture represents the death of civilization -- and the integrated, the enthusiastic and unquestioning embrace of whatever mass culture offers. These deliberately polemical options are negotiated by Eco as he argues that mass culture certainly is a valid subject for analysis, the sort of calm, reasoned (and semiotic) analysis practised by Eco throughout his academic career, and that we also recognise in the Roland Barthes of *Mythologies*. Nevertheless, this kind of analysis cannot be performed without some kind of love for the subject, a love that Eco readily displays in his essays on film, comic-strips and popular fiction.

Regarding the whole Eco phenomenon ('il caso Eco', as Margharita Ganeri labels it, thinking no doubt of Eco's co-editorship of *Il caso Bond*), it is the constant turn to items of popular culture as reference points, particularly the detective story, paranoid literature, 'Illuminatus' books, comic books (from Superman to Mickey Mouse and Snoopy) and even the romantic novels of Barbara Cartland that are most noticeably prominent in the fiction of this medieval scholar.⁸⁹ We should not and cannot be surprised by his use of his medieval knowledge, although Eco's use of the Baroque is less expected, both in terms of sensibility and the actual texts of the era, when it arrives in *The Island of the Day Before* (except, of course, that Eco is usually seen as a postmodernist writer, and postmodernism has identifiably quasi-

⁸⁸ *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, p.63.

⁸⁹ Margherita Ganeri, *Il caso Eco* (Palermo: Palumbo, 1991); Oreste del Buono and Umberto Eco (eds.), *Il caso Bond* (Milan: Bompiani, 1965), translated by R.A. Downie as *The Bond Affair* (London: Macdonald, 1966).

Baroque characteristics). However, we are not surprised, given his avowed position in relation to the neo-avant-garde, by Eco's constant, insistent referral to popular culture sources, in preference, frequently, to literary or high-cultural references that could be doing the same job. So, in talking of the city and paranoia, Eco develops these by quoting and referring to twentieth-century paranoid fiction, hard-boiled detective fiction, rather than for example to Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and *Brothers Karamazov*, or to Kafka. We may excuse the relative lack of Kafka references in novels that purport, as Eco's do, to be broadly historical rather than fantastical. Excuses will only get us so far, though. Kafka is clearly present in certain resonances of Eco's fiction, but he is not called up in the way that, for example, Jorge Luis Borges is.

Borges is, as will become increasingly apparent, the typical, almost paradigmatic, intertextual reference in Eco's fiction. This is significant not simply for the tracing of Borgesian elements in Eco's work, of which there are many, but in understanding the Anglophone influences that Eco is receiving from attentive reading of the Argentinian. Borges's literary influences, both idiosyncratic and highly biased towards English, can be detected in the English authors, such as G.K. Chesterton and Robert Louis Stevenson, to whom Eco makes otherwise perhaps slightly unexpected reference. 'Throughout his life', as one biographer of the Argentinian writes, 'Borges classed Chesterton with Stevenson and Kipling as the authors who meant most to him in English'.⁹⁰ It is precisely because of this peculiar blending in Borges of the learned and high cultural sensibility with a substantially pop cultural field of reference that appeals to Eco. Borges is crossing a boundary that Eco is concerned himself to cross. Eco's criticism of the *neo-avanguardia*, with the benefit of hindsight, is that it failed to cross that boundary, which is, in a sense, not simply between the high and the low, but the ideal and the real, between thought and action.

⁹⁰ James Woodall, *The Man in the Mirror of the Book: A Life of Jorge Luis Borges* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996), p.27.

It is only infrequently that the fate of an artistic movement is determined by a specific political event, but the two years of protest, *contestazione*, in Italy, 1968 and 1969, performed this rare feat for the *neo-avanguardia*. 1968 was the year of student protest, not just in Italy, but worldwide. The occupation of universities, and the resultant clashes with the police, was as familiar in France and the United States as it was in Italy, and of course, the communality of such events only served to give the protesting students a feeling of genuine progress against a system that transcended national boundaries. Ongoing protests against the Vietnam war were reinforced by the riots at the Democratic Convention in Chicago in the August of 1968, and fed into a potential student-led uprising throughout much of Western Europe.

These protests were followed in Italy by a year of essentially industrial dispute, marked by strikes, inter-union struggle, even sabotage. The industrial unrest was opportunistic, feeding on the perceived successes of the student protests, but essentially focused on gaining a result in the three-yearly pay rounds. The economic battle was largely won by the unions, but for the Italian radicals, the glory days finished in December 1969 when political protest gave way to terrorist action.⁹¹ This was marked by the sixteen fatalities caused by a large bomb placed in a bank in central Milan. The tone for the seventies was set, but in the meantime, the more optimistic and innocent protests of the previous year had already, it seems, claimed the life of the *Gruppo 63*.

Eco calls his account of the movement of which he was a part 'The Death of the *Gruppo 63*', focusing on just this moment, and arguing that the convocations of earnest artists and intellectuals that formed the heart of the *Gruppo 63*, were simply superseded by events -- real events out on the streets that made redundant the laboured production of thoughtful journals like *Quindici*. The situation is most concisely expressed, however, by Christopher Wagstaff:

⁹¹ On terrorism in Italy, in addition to previously cited works by Mammarella, Kogan, Castronovo and Ginsburg, see particularly P. Allum, 'Political Terrorism in Italy', *Journal of the Association of Teachers of Italian* 25 (1978), 5-18, and J. Fraser, *Italy: Society in Crisis/Society in Transformation* (London: RKP, 1981).

The neo-avantgarde was committed to working within the autonomy which art conferred at the level of ideology; its members believed this to be the only effective area of operation available to them. When, in 1968, Italy seemed to offer significant opportunities for direct political action, the *Gruppo 63* saw its *raison d'être* disappear, and members responded in very different ways to the situation. Certainly, the literature which Anceschi had put on a par with social, economic and political activity in 1956, and which the *Gruppo* had seen as a vanguard, was in danger of being left far behind by the students and the metalworkers of 1968. *Quindici* ceased publication in 1969.⁹²

This crisis of the neo-avant-garde movement is one of failure only in that its essential passivity is exposed. The drama is played out in *Foucault's Pendulum*, with Belbo and Casaubon dodging out of the riots on the streets, replaying Belbo's failure to become engaged in the war, but this time more culpably. The deep division here, between the talking and fighting, between the contemplative and the active, is present in all of Eco's fiction. *The Name of the Rose* provides a reflection of the situation in the trial for heresy of the cellarer, Remigio of Varagine. The episode is in terms of the detective story a typical example of the detective's over-confident accusation of the wrong man, and is also an opportunity for Eco to display his knowledge of the more paranoid type of Inquisitorial logic. However, the scene is slowly transformed into a consideration of the morality of acting on one's beliefs. Remigio, accused of being in his youth a member of the Fraticelli, and knowing that he is additionally in danger of being found guilty of the various murders in the abbey, finally finds the courage to aver the heresies he has denied for so long. He tells the inquisitor, Bernardo Gui, how he avoided death and torture through going against his inner beliefs:

E sono anni, tanti anni che mi dico quanto fui vile, e quanto fui felice di essere vile, e tuttavia speravo sempre di poter mostrare a me stesso che non ero così vile [...] Mi hai dato il coraggio di confessare quello in cui ho creduto con l'anima, mentre il corpo se ne ritraeva.

And for years, many years, I have told myself how base I was, and how happy I was to be base, and yet I was always hoping that I could demonstrate to myself that I was not such a coward [...] You have

⁹² *Writers & Society in Contemporary Italy*, p.37.

given me the courage to confess what I believe in my soul, as my body falls away from it.⁹³

Things being what they are, Remigio's body is to be made to fall away rapidly, with his impending execution for heresy. The courage given to him is to play the role assigned, even as he realises the futility of doing so. We are to see a form of redemption in the simple fact of Remigio's overcoming of his cowardice, regardless of the fact that it changes nothing, and leads more quickly to his death. The same solution is recommended at the end of *Foucault's Pendulum*, when Belbo is threatened with death by 'Them', convinced as they are that he holds the secret -- a secret that does not, in fact, exist. He is given the opportunity to redeem himself through doing something -- anything -- definite. Allowing his persecutors to think he has the secret, Belbo, 'now invincible', reveals the secret to the arch-conspirator: 'Ma gavte la nata'.⁹⁴ It is a Piedmontese saying, the wisdom of his provincial childhood, meaning roughly 'You're full of shit'.

Not forgetting Eco's distance from the events of the late sixties when writing the novels, this appeal to do the right thing, even though the right thing is inadequate (which is another way of saying that it is only relatively, not universally, correct), is an acknowledgement of how badly the *neo-avanguardia* rose to the challenges of the revolutionary moment. One of the few exceptions was Nanni Balestrini, who followed his eminently neo-avant-garde novel *Tristano* with *Vogliamo tutto*, a first-person account of a worker in a Fiat factory during the *contestazione*.⁹⁵ The cut-and-paste style survives only inasmuch as Balestrini incorporates documents, declarations and reports of the time by way of grounding the action in the actual events, and seeking to explain them through the fiction. He continued with this adaptation of cut-and-paste in 1976's *La violenza illustrata*, a somewhat more abstracted attack on the inherent violence of capitalism.⁹⁶ However, it is *Vogliamo tutto* that is closest to what Eco will later be attempting, in its focus on historical

⁹³ *The Name of the Rose*, p.390; p.387.

⁹⁴ *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.471; p.595.

⁹⁵ Nanni Balestrini, *Vogliamo tutto* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1971).

⁹⁶ Nanni Balestrini, *La violenza illustrata* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976).

reconstruction, its placing of cut-and-paste at the service of a relatively orthodox narrative, its valorisation of the moment of action (industrial or otherwise), and not least in its use of the map. Whereas Sanguineti had printed the game board of *Il giuoco dell'oca* on the endpapers of his novel, Balestrini puts there a map of the factory, inviting the reader to imagine the action occurring in a material space that is planned out, almost tangible. With his printing of a map of the abbey on the endpapers of *The Name of the Rose*, and various maps and diagrams in *Foucault's Pendulum*, Eco will adopt this device for a mixture of reasons, including Balestrini's commitment to authenticity. Of course, such maps and figures also link Eco's fiction to an older tradition of adventure stories, ranging from *Robinson Crusoe* and *Treasure Island* to Poe's *Arthur Gordon Pym* and Erskine Childers' *The Riddle of the Sands*, where they are used as devices both to engage the reader and to give the text a sheen of authenticity. It is the adoption of this rhetorically very powerful ploy on the liminal space of the novel that will turn out to be one of the most intriguing aspects of Eco's fiction, certainly not originating in Balestrini's use of the map, but rendered politically relevant by it.

As mentioned, however, Balestrini's rejuvenated political commitment was far from the typical response in the neo-avant-garde. The predominant fate was a dissipation of the revolutionary values that had found their most hopeful expression in the direct action of 1968. When Casaubon returns to Italy after the best part of a decade in Brazil, he is shocked by the manner in which the people he knew as revolutionaries hanging out at Pilade's bar have become either establishment or New-Age figures:

chi copywriter in un'agenzia pubblicitaria, chi consulente fiscale, chi venditore di libri [su] erboristeria, buddhismo, astrologia.

This one was a copywriter in an advertising agency; this one, a tax consultant; and this one sold books [on] herbals, Buddhism, astrology.⁹⁷

The revolutionary energies of 1968, rather as they did at the end of the Second World War, fade away into different self-interests and different dead ends, one of

⁹⁷ *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.178; p.223.

the most important of which is the Hermeticism central to *Foucault's Pendulum*, which will be explored in Chapter Three. Part of the reason for this dissipation of energy is that political conflict suddenly became removed from the realm of the student or the worker. Instead, the radical actions dominating Italian politics came from terrorist groups on the extreme left and extreme right of the political spectrum, with a series of bombings, kidnappings and murders throughout the nineteen seventies. With the devolution of much of the political debate to tiny, unrepresentative cells on either side came much confusion for those left in the middle. The situation is exemplified by the bombing of the Milanese bank in 1969. Initially assumed to be the work of revolutionary socialists, the explosion turned out to originate from extremists of the right.

Sciascia: Conspiracy and Investigation

As a direct consequence of the rise in terrorist action in Italy through the nineteen seventies, one of the great issues for any literature that hoped to address politics was the attempt to disentangle the mysteries of contemporary society. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the writing of Leonardo Sciascia. Being a lawyer, and eventually a parliamentary representative himself, Sciascia was able to comment with some authority on the processes of Italian governance. He found this role -- or perhaps one ought to say that the role found him -- through the dominant mode throughout all of his writing, the detective story.

As in the case of Calvino mentioned above, Sciascia had begun in the mode of neo-realist writing, with a clear social mission to highlight regional deprivation evident in his early explorations of life in his native Sicily, *Le parrocchie di Regalpetra* and *Gli zii di Sicilia*.⁹⁸ However, at the beginning of the sixties, while the *neoavanguardia* sought to replace neo-realism with more experimental forms of literature, Sciascia moved to the highly formalised genre of detective fiction. This decision is at least partly explained by the themes on which Sciascia chose to focus: the iniquities caused to ordinary people by governmental corruption, and the dark

⁹⁸ Leonardo Sciascia, *Gli zii di Sicilia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1958), translated by N.S. Thompson as *Sicilian Uncles* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1986).

power in Sicily of the Mafia, as best expressed in 1961's *Il giorno della civetta*.⁹⁹ The novel pits a rational and fair-minded detective from Parma, clearly drawn with authorial sympathy, against the entire edifice of Mafia-corrupted Sicilian society. If the investigation fails, it is not because of the failings of the detective, it is because the society conspires against it, particularly in the way in which the code of silence, *omertà*, stifles the possibility of it gaining either overt support, or the clues it needs to progress.

The power of *omertà* is displayed best in Sciascia's classic, *A ciascuno il suo*.¹⁰⁰ Another Sicilian novel, this is strongly marked by a concentration on conversation, deception and whispering together (conspiracy in its etymological sense as well as social meaning). One of the themes is the limit of rational inquiry, the acknowledgement that 'reality is always richer, more unpredictable than our deductions'.¹⁰¹ This, accepted by Sciascia's essentially rational intellect, is a pattern that is recognisable in Eco's explorations into the limits of interpretation. A significant aspect of the realisation of this limit is the acknowledgement of *omertà*. Sciascia's realises that there is no innate drive in the world to truth, to exposition, in the way that there is in detective fiction. The anonymous narrator takes a moment at the start of one chapter to elaborate this point:

Che un delitto si offra agli inquirenti come un quadro i cui elementi materiali e, per così dire, stilistici consentano, se sottilmente reperiati e analizzati, una sicura attribuzione, è corollario di tutti quei romanzi polizieschi cui buona parte dell'umanità si abbevera. Nella realtà le cose stanno però diversamente: e i coefficienti dell'impunità e dell'errore sono alti non perché (o non soltanto, o non sempre) è basso l'intelletto degli inquirenti, ma perché gli elementi che un delitto offre sono di solito assolutamente insufficienti. Un delitto, diciamo, commesso o organizzato da gente che ha tutta la buona volontà di contribuire a tenere alto il coefficiente di impunità.

⁹⁹ Leonardo Sciascia, *Il giorno della civetta* (Turin: Einaudi, 1961), translated by Archibald Colquhoun as *Mafia Vendetta* (London: Cape, 1963).

¹⁰⁰ Leonardo Sciascia, *A ciascuno il suo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1966), translated by Adrienne Foulke as *A Man's Blessing* (later published as *To Each His Own*) (London: Cape, 1968).

¹⁰¹ 'la realtà è sempre più ricca e imprevedibile delle nostre deduzioni', *A ciascuno il suo*, p.125; p.136.

Gli elementi che portano a risolvere i delitti che si presentano con carattere di mistero o di gratuità sono la *confidenza* diciamo professionale, la delazione anonima, il caso. E un po', soltanto un po', l'acutezza degli inquirenti.

One corollary of all the detective novels to which a goodly share of mankind repairs for refreshment specifies that a crime present its investigators with a picture, the material and, so to speak, stylistic elements of which, if meticulously assembled and analyzed, permit a sure solution. In actuality, however, the situation is different. The coefficients of impunity and error are high not because, or not only or not always because, the investigators are men of small intelligence but because the clues a crime offers are usually utterly inadequate. A crime, that is to say, which is planned or committed by people who have every interest in working to keep the impunity coefficient high.

The factors that lead to the solution of seemingly mysterious or gratuitous crimes are what may be called the professional stool pigeon, the anonymous informer, and chance. And to a degree -- but only to a degree -- the acuteness of the investigators.¹⁰²

It is interesting to bear these factors in mind, particularly for the detective work in *The Name of the Rose*. The real significance for Sciascia's novel lies, in fact, in the reference to the acuteness of the detective. The amateur detective in the novel, Professor Laurana, is finally shown to be not the rational superman we recognise from the classic detective tradition, but the fool. Laurana thinks that by careful investigation he is finding out about the death, slowly working his way to the solution. What he completely fails to realise is that although his speculations are right, he is not operating in a vacuum. Those responsible for the death are already ahead of him, waiting to see if he will be foolish enough to voice his suspicions. When he confides his conclusions to the widow of the murder victim, not realising that she was implicated in the murder, Laurana is abducted and killed. The question of what happened becomes superseded by the more paranoid question: who knows? It is a theme we will find expressed in a range of fiction, including that by Pynchon and Fowles, all coming from the 'trust nobody' ethos expressed in the detective fiction of Hammett. The final chapter of the novel shows the foolishness of Laurana, compared to the guarded silence of all those to whom he talked. The locals quickly calculate the reason for Laurana's death: his breaking of *omertà*. We realise that

¹⁰² *A ciascuno il suo*, p.53; pp.53-4.

everyone else suspected the truth more or less from the beginning, but they understood the truth, and its consequences well enough to remain silent.

Sciascia's commitment to exploring both the conspiratorial nature of his native Sicily and the possibility of its rational investigation quickly led him to explore less obvious modes of detective reasoning. The first of these, *Il consiglio d'Egitto*, displays such a proximity of theme to *Foucault's Pendulum* that it bears detailed examination, as an obvious influence on Eco's novel.¹⁰³ Sciascia's novel is based on his investigations of a curious incident in Sicilian history, where a priest, Don Giuseppe Vella, deliberately mistranslates the opinion of a stranded Moroccan ambassador on a manuscript written in Arabic held in the monastery of San Martino. The ambassador identifies it as a common life of the prophet, but Vella, seeing an opportunity for glory, pretends that it is a precious account of the Arab conquest of Sicily. Vella is given the prestigious task of translating the codex, which he duly does, inventing the details of the conquest as he sees fit.

To protect himself against the investigations of other Arabic scholars, Vella first modifies the manuscript itself. He cuts up the codex and rearranges the pages, before altering the characters themselves to produce a hybrid script, something like Maltese transliterated into Arabic script.¹⁰⁴ Here we can identify a relationship to the techniques of the *neoavanguardia* similar to that found within *Foucault's Pendulum*. Vella, like the Editors, performs a cut-and-paste on history, a performance of avant-gardist poetics enclosed within a traditional-looking, historical narrative. He does it at first for his own amusement. Then, because he begins to see political possibilities within the project, he engages upon the construction of a new manuscript, 'The Council of Egypt', which will establish a precedent for all power in Sicily being in the hands of the King, rather than in the hands of the corrupt Barons. For a short time, he succeeds in producing work that looks safely historical, but has the potency to effect real political change. This is ironically confirmed by the short-sighted compliment offered to him by the Viceroy of Sicily, comparing Vella favourably to the contemporary producers of political tracts:

¹⁰³ Leonardo Sciascia, *Il consiglio d'Egitto* (Turin: Einaudi, 1963), translated by Adrienne Foulke as *The Council of Egypt* (New York: Knopf, 1966).

¹⁰⁴ *Il consiglio d'Egitto*, pp.28-9; pp.24-5.

Tutta roba che vuole sconvolgere il mondo, corrompere ogni virtù... Non c'è imbrattacarte, ormai, che non voglia dire la sua sull'organizzazione dello Stato, sull'amministrazione della giustizia, sui diritti dei re e su quello dei popoli... Perciò io ammiro gente come voi, che se ne sta a cercare le cose del passato campando in santa pace col presente, senza il prurito di mettere sottosopra il mondo... Vi ammiro, ecco, vi ammiro...

All rubbish that wants to turn the world upside down, to corrupt every virtue... There's not a scribbler alive today who doesn't want to have his say about the organization of the state, the administration of justice, the rights of the King, and the rights of the people. That's why I admire men like you. You spend your time looking for things in the past and get along in blessed peace with the present. You aren't itching to turn the world upside down... I admire you, indeed, I admire you...¹⁰⁵

This, too, finds a virtually identical echo in the presentation of *The Name of the Rose*, the authorial introduction of which offers precisely the same ironically formulated guarantee of its political relevance, and therefore offering the same justification for delving into history rather than committing itself to the present:

Transcrivo senza preoccupazione di attualità. Negli anni in cui scoprivo il testo dell'abate Vallet circolava la persuasione che si dovesse scrivere solo impegnandosi sul presente, e per cambiare il mondo. A dieci e più anni di distanza è ora consolazione dell'uomo di lettere (restituito alla sua altissima dignità) che si possa scrivere per puro amor di scrittura. E così ora mi sento libero di raccontare, per semplice gusto fabulatorio, la storia di Adso da Melk, e provo conforto e consolazione nel ritrovarla così incommensurabilmente lontano nel tempo (ora che la veglia della ragione ha fugato tutti i mostri che il suo sonno aveva generato), così gloriosamente priva di rapporto coi tempi nostri, intemporalmente estranea alle nostre speranze e alle nostre sicurezze.

I transcribe my text with no concern for timeliness. In the years when I discovered the Abbé Vallet volume, there was a widespread conviction that one should write only out of a commitment to the present, in order to change the world. Now, after ten years or more, the man of letters (restored to his loftiest dignity) can happily write out of pure love of writing. And so I now feel free to tell, for sheer narrative pleasure, the story of Adso of Melk, and I am comforted and consoled in finding it immeasurably remote in time (now that the

¹⁰⁵ *Il consiglio d'Egitto*, p.110; p.127, my translation.

waking of reason has dispelled all the monsters that its sleep had generated), gloriously lacking in any relevance for our day, atemporally alien to our hopes and our certainties.¹⁰⁶

As Pischedda rather needlessly points out, 'difficile crederci'; it is difficult to completely believe this.¹⁰⁷ Eco, like Sciascia, is exploring the possibility of turning what would otherwise be abstruse, academic labour into influential political commentary. Sciascia's novel is an argument in favour of the possibility opened up by a post-structuralist viewpoint on the recombinatory poetics of the *neo-avanguardia*, the question that sits at the centre (physically as well as philosophically, being halfway through *Foucault's Pendulum*) of Eco's fiction, whether it is possible 'to arrive at the truth through the painstaking reconstruction of a false text'.¹⁰⁸ Eco's troubled negotiation of this issue will be explored later, but it is evident that Sciascia, for one, can see the value of false texts as excusable tools of subversion against dominant political structures.

Calling upon an obvious distinction between the man of action and the man of contemplation, Sciascia contrasts Vella's fortunes with those of an ambitious lawyer, Di Blasi, with a similar grudge against the Barons. Di Blasi, while acute enough to suspect the true nature of Vella's manuscripts early on, and politically sympathetic to him, has little taste for the manipulation of historical fact involved. This is shown, eventually, to be little more than a matter of taste, as Di Blasi is discovered to be sponsoring a Jacobin revolt, which fails, leaving the lawyer to be executed. The strong implication of Sciascia's juxtaposition of protagonists is that there are situations where direct action is impossible, and where an Odyssean craftiness, acting through the less direct channels of the manipulation of information, is both legitimated, and the most effective resistance. Di Blasi's final comment on Vella's forgery reflects this, acknowledging 'that there is fraud in life, and that yours has at

¹⁰⁶ *The Name of the Rose*, p.15; p.5.

¹⁰⁷ Bruno Pischedda, *Come leggere Il nome della rosa di Umberto Eco* (Milan: Mursia, 1994).

¹⁰⁸ 'Trovare la verità ricostruendo esattamente un testo mendace', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.362; p.459.

least the merit of being a zestful one, and even, in one sense [...] useful'.¹⁰⁹ Vella's own conclusion, formed while he waits in prison, looks back to his past as a numerist (assigning numbers to people's dreams), and is a potent conjunction of cabbalism and post-structuralist relativism:

La vita è davvero un sogno: l'uomo vuole averne coscienza e non fa che inventare cabale; ogni tempo la sua cabala, ogni uomo la sua... E facciamo costellazioni di numeri, del sogno che è la vita: per la ruota di Dio o per la ruota della ragione.

Life really is a dream. Men want to be aware, to understand, and they do nothing but invent cabalas. Every age has its own cabala, every man has his own. And out of the dream that life is we form constellations of numbers to play on the wheel of God or the wheel of Reason.¹¹⁰

Sciascia, then, denies a division between art and life, between passive contemplation and active struggle, between fakery and fact, by illustrating how a project that begins as an exercise in artistic self-absorption becomes, inexorably, a genuine political intervention. It may be argued that Sciascia enacts this movement in history of his own work, starting out as a novelist, and finishing as a politician who produced only books of investigative non-fiction. The first instance of this movement, deriving immediately from Sciascia's research for *Il consiglio d'Egitto*, is a monograph of historical investigation (the first of Sciascia's attempts to do real-life detective work), *Morte dell'Inquisitore*.¹¹¹ This can be put in a rather elegant contrast to the situation with Eco, whose historical researches have paved the way for his novels. Sciascia, perhaps because of his unwavering belief in the power of rationalism, finds that his fiction keeps on leading him back to reality, be it in the form of accounts of real events, or real involvement in everyday politics.

¹⁰⁹ 'che la vita ha tante imposture che la vostra ha almeno il merito di essere allegra e anche, in un certo senso [...] utile', *Il consiglio d'Egitto*, p.175; p.201.

¹¹⁰ *Il consiglio d'Egitto*, p.164; p.190.

¹¹¹ Leonardo Sciascia, *Morte dell'Inquisitore* (Bari: Laterza, 1964) translated by J. Green as *The Death of the Inquisitor* in *Salt in the Wound* (with *The Death of the Inquisitor*) (New York: Orion, 1969).

There is in fact a curious situation here. Sciascia believes in the power of rational analysis as a tool for understanding society, and also for understanding the past. He also recognises the difficulty, as in *Il consiglio d'Egitto* and as acknowledged by the unfinished nature of *Morte dell'Inquisitore*, of understanding society through rational analysis, hence the self-consciousness of the effort.

By contrast, Eco moves in the opposite direction, from historical reconstruction to fiction. That is to say, Eco already has a confidence in the possibility of historical reconstruction (though, of course, he too recognises its difficulties and limitations). From this position, he becomes increasingly interested in recombining the historical data to create new projections of history, an exploration of the ludic possibilities of knowledge. There does, however, seem to be a belief that even subjected to the manipulations of play, the narrative can retain (or can construct afresh) some level of historical truth. It is worthwhile noting at this point Eco's semi-serious argument that the anachronisms of *The Name of the Rose* are 'authentic' inasmuch as the culture did eventually produce those ideas:

If a character of mine, comparing two medieval ideas, produces a third, more modern, idea, he is doing exactly what culture did; and if nobody has ever written what he says, someone, however confusedly, should surely have begun to think it (perhaps without saying it, blocked by countless fears and by shame).¹¹²

Naturally, this argument is self-serving, and reflects an improbably naïve view of inevitable progress in the history of ideas. What it may serve to help us understand is that not even Eco himself is untainted by the paranoid logic he regularly criticises in the late nineteen eighties. In *Foucault's Pendulum*, the picture he draws of the world of the paranoid (which the novel labels 'i diabolici' -- the Diabolicals) is obviously aided by a substantial personal library on the subject.¹¹³ This indicates an enthusiasm for the subject, even if that is contained within a

¹¹² *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, p.76.

¹¹³ When asked in 1995 whether his library was specialized in any particular field, Eco replied: 'Lunatic science [...] I buy treatises, but only if they are wrong', Interview by John Hooper, *Guardian*, 30 Sept 1995, Section 2, p.27. See also JoAnn Cannon, 'The Imaginary Universe of Umberto Eco: A Reading of *Foucault's Pendulum*', *Modern Fiction Studies* 4 (1992), 895-909, 908, n.28.

knowledge of its inherent foolishness. Eco, as he would undoubtedly agree, has, like all of us, a strain of the Diabolical in him. This is beautifully illustrated by comparing the above comment on *The Name of the Rose* with the opening thesis on incredulity made by Casaubon in *Foucault's Pendulum*:

Di due cose che non stiano insieme, crederle tutte e due, e con l'idea che da qualche parte ve ne sia una terza, occulta, che le unisce, questa è la credulità.

If two things don't fit, but you believe both of them, thinking that somewhere, hidden, there must be a third thing that connects them, that's credulity.¹¹⁴

If Casaubon's point is meant to be taken seriously, as it surely is, then Eco has just demonstrated his own credulity. Of course, in the end, all Eco is saying is that all types of historical reconstruction, including his own, and even if they are guided by eminently rational principles of detection, as Sciascia's are, are no more than speculation, and are potentially open to being exposed as one of Vella's cabbalas -- a dream of reality. Any serious difference between Eco's and Sciascia's uses of the detective model then rests in Sciascia's passionate urgency, his belief that some investigation, even a falsified one, into the corruption of Italy is desperately required. Di Blasi's defence of Vella in *Il consiglio d'Egitto*, just as it clearly speaks to the Sicily of Sciascia's day as much as Vella's, also seems to speak of Sciascia himself:

l'abate Vella non ha commesso un crimine, ha soltanto messo su la parodia di un crimine, rovesciandone i termini... Di un crimine che in Sicilia si consuma da secoli.

Abbot Vella has not committed a crime; reversing the terms, he has produced the parody of a crime, of the crime that we in Sicily have been committing for centuries.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.47; p.49.

¹¹⁵ *Il consiglio d'Egitto*, p.126; p.144-5.

This, however, was the view of Sciascia in 1963, contemplating mainly the threat of the admittedly influential Mafia. It was with the sequence of political crimes and terrorist acts of the seventies that Sciascia felt sufficiently able, or sufficiently desperate, to abandon the indirect action of historical fiction, and engage himself directly both as a politician and as an investigative writer. Although few had the direct approach of Sciascia, the terrorist events in Italy through the seventies were common currency for writers of all kinds, including Eco. Although he is criticised by Bruno Pischedda for appearing to shrink from the direct treatment of the subject in *The Name of the Rose*, Eco deals with terrorist matters several times in his essays.¹¹⁶ At the heart of Eco's considerations, as at the symbolic heart of the entire Italian experience of the decade, was the Red Brigades' kidnapping on the sixteenth of March 1978 and the subsequent murder of the president of the Christian Democratic party, Aldo Moro.¹¹⁷ Eco's concern is an understandable one: to render the obscure, almost alien motivation and behaviour of the Red Brigades into a common discourse. In other words, by dint of their political extremity, the actions of the Red Brigades were almost incomprehensible to the political mainstream. Eco's articles reflect a desire to render this behaviour in comprehensible terms, either of the system of multinational capitalism, or of impulses that might under other conditions be sublimated into mainstream-approved activities.

By way of complete contrast to Eco's reaction, Sciascia quickly responded to the kidnapping with a 'report' that sought to explain, materially, who was responsible, in the manner of a real-life detective. The result, *L'Affaire Moro*, was one in a line of detective investigations that Sciascia had published into real events and crimes.¹¹⁸ From 1977 Sciascia completely abandoned the writing of fiction in order to produce his investigations of historical, and particularly judicial, mysteries, such as *Dalle*

¹¹⁶ Pischedda, pp.90-1.

¹¹⁷ See, in English, the articles 'Striking at the Heart of the State' and 'Why Are They Laughing in Those Cages?' collected in Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality* (also published as *Faith in Fakes*), translated by William Weaver (London: Secker & Warburg, 1986), pp.113-23.

¹¹⁸ Leonardo Sciascia, *L'Affaire Moro* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1978), translated together with *La scomparsa di Majorana* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975) by Sacha Rabinovitch as *The Moro Affair and The Mystery of Majorana* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1987).

parte degli infedeli and *Il teatro della memoria*.¹¹⁹ All of these investigations are marked by Sciascia's confidence that with careful, rational analysis by a probing intelligence, the political and criminal conspiracies that blighted Italian society could be understood, if not necessarily defeated. In this he was already somewhat conservative in his belief in a detective method virtually unchanged since Poe's Dupin unravelled the criminal and political mysteries of Paris in the eighteen-forties. His publications continued to make clear what Sciascia had identified as far back as 1953 as the main quality of detective fiction, the pursuit of an elegant solution to an essentially intellectual problem.¹²⁰ This separates him from developments in the genre made by 'hard-boiled' writers such as Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett, even though stylistically Sciascia is close to the laconic, dialogue-heavy prose of Hammett. It certainly means that although Sciascia's detectives frequently fail, his detective stories are not to be confused with the wave of existential, avant-garde or allegorical detective stories, sometimes referred to as anti-detective stories, that marked an artistic re-engagement with the genre in the middle of the century. The major figures in these terms range from Jorge Luis Borges and Graham Greene to Vladimir Nabokov and Alain Robbe-Grillet, and onwards to Thomas Pynchon and Paul Auster. The particular influence of these on Eco's fiction will be examined in due course, but here we must note that this phenomenon, that could be traced almost worldwide, due in large part to the global reach of Anglo-American detective novels and American film noir, also had its impact in Italy.

Il giallo and le nouveau roman: Appropriations of the Detective Narrative

It is at this point that we must break the chronological sequence, in order to trace how, among the appropriations of popular forms by the *nouveau romanciers* and the *neo-avanguardia*, the detective story occupies a special prominence that warrants a separate examination. Almost from the launch of Mondadori's famous yellow-jacketed series of translations of detective stories, *i gialli*, the perception of the

¹¹⁹ Leonardo Sciascia, *Dalle parte degli infedeli* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1979), and *Il teatro della memoria* (Turin: Einaudi, 1981).

¹²⁰ Leonardo Sciascia, 'Letteratura del giallo', *Letteratura* 3 (1953), 65-7.

detective genre in Italy reflected the more modern hard-boiled sensibility, with its focus on urban alienation, sex and violence, cheap life and easy death, rather more than the older, more sedate English tradition. This means that the *giallo*, with its low-cultural associations, would only become interesting to more artistically committed writers when they themselves had become interested in adapting low-cultural forms to their own ends. Therefore, against Sciascia's solid, pragmatic investigations we might place the work of Luigi Malerba, another member of the *Gruppo 63*. Malerba uses elements of the detective story form to explore that most exemplary trope of the *nouveau roman*, the disorder of reality when measured against the artificial order of traditional narrative. As, for example, the narrator of Malerba's *Il serpente* tries to impose some kind of coherent narrative onto his existence, he is increasingly forced into wild speculations of a grand conspiracy, such as the very Pynchonian thought, no doubt following the paranoia regarding the American postal system in *The Crying of Lot 49*, that 'behind philately an international crime organization like the Mafia or the famous Murder Inc. of Chicago is hidden'.¹²¹

Malerba's 1968 novel, *Salto Mortale*, also develops from a classic detective story premise.¹²² The narrator is accused of a murder, and even his narrative, as he seeks to defend himself, is verbally battered by the interventions of another, anonymous, voice. As in Robbe-Grillet's pseudo-detective novel, *Les Gommages*, the text is haunted by images that point towards meanings, but which are never actually resolved in the text. The image, for example, of an assassin pulling the trigger on his target calls forth powerful associations with significant political assassinations, particular in the USA, during the sixties, in a manner that will also find expression not only in

¹²¹ 'dietro la filatelia si nasconde una associazione internazionale del delitto come la famosa Mafia o la famosa Murder di Chicago', Luigi Malerba, *Il serpente* (Milan: Bompiani, 1966), p.141, translated by William Weaver as *The Serpent* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1968), p.118.

¹²² Luigi Malerba, *Salto mortale* (Milan: Bompiani, 1968), translated by William Weaver as *What Is This Buzzing, Do You Hear It Too?* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1969).

expressly paranoid minds, but in the more measured assessments of writers such as Don DeLillo.¹²³

These references to sources of urban paranoia are to be found throughout Malerba's work. His 1986 novel, *Il pianeta azzuro* is a diary-like account of an assassin working his way toward his victim.¹²⁴ Although it contains echoes of Robbe-Grillet's appropriation of the crime story, *Le Voyeur*, Malerba's novel is generically closer to Frederick Forsyth's *The Day of the Jackal* (made into an enormously popular film of the same name in 1973) than it is to the detective story *per se*. Nevertheless it shares with the modern *giallo* an interest in contemporary crime, such as the *Propaganda Due* (P2) scandal of the early eighties. Of course, the focus on the criminal can be traced further back even than Francis Iles' 1931 novel *Malice Aforethought*, which famously revealed the identity of the killer in the opening sentence, to the Raffles stories of Conan Doyle's brother-in-law, E.W. Hornung, in which the urbane criminal was the protagonist.¹²⁵ Malerba is as interested in crime as any detective writer, but he is liberated from the need to frame his narratives in the straightjacket of the investigation of a detective because his novels retain their mystery through problematising the narrative itself.

The killer's diary in *Il pianeta azzuro* is edited by an anonymous figure who, after the assassination, is increasingly identified with the killer. A framing narrative voice suggests that the assassin hid behind the identity of the diarist, forming a *mise-en-abîme* of identities that recalls Nabokov and Borges. This unsettling of the narrative voice is already familiar from the similar structure of *Salto mortale*, and from the manner in which the narrator of *Il serpente* is repeatedly revealed to be unreliable. Not only do we find that he has invented characters and occurrences, but events have a disturbing tendency to slide between dreams or lies and reality. In the end, with the narrator being asked to provide a written statement to the police, we

¹²³ Don DeLillo's *Libra* (London: Penguin, 1988) attempts the paradoxical trick of describing in fiction a real assassination (that of John F. Kennedy) as a conspiracy of accidents, a coherent narrative structure in which there is no volition, no intention.

¹²⁴ Luigi Malerba, *Il pianeta azzuro* (Milan: Bompiani, 1986).

¹²⁵ The opening line in question was: 'Before he killed her Dr Bickleigh did give Julia a last chance', in Francis Iles, *Malice Aforethought: the Story of a Commonplace Crime* (London: Gollancz, 1931), p.1.

realise that the statement is, in a sense, the novel. This *mise-en-abîme*, as elsewhere in Malerba's work, teases the reader with the feeling that there is some progress being made toward the truth, that the lies, deceptions and holes in the story are being resolved into a coherent, complete narrative. However, this level of stable truth is never quite reached. All that is left, as in the clearly influential *Les Gommages* and *Le Voyeur* of Robbe-Grillet, is a narrative without the structured definition of meaning imposed by an omniscient authorial presence.¹²⁶ The selection of detective and crime narratives by both Robbe-Grillet and Malerba emphasises the absence of such a structure, as stories of assassins and random murderers are markedly less prone to easy resolution into coherent narratives in the real world than they are in the fictional realm, when they are inevitably brought to closure within 300 pages, or two hours on the cinema screen. For both Robbe-Grillet and Malerba, therefore, the deliberate frustration of narrative closure in these particular generic forms brilliantly illustrates their arguments about the failures of traditional narrative styles to address the open-endedness, the chaos, of reality.

This chaos, for Robbe-Grillet especially, was the prime characteristic of the human realm, as opposed to the regular, ordered, often geometrical structuration of the material world. The exaggerated precision of the descriptions of rooms, objects and landscape serves Robbe-Grillet's idea that the new novel cannot pretend, as the traditional novel did, to portray the world as it is, but instead must concentrate on precisely describing its artificial assemblies of images. In doing so, the new novel finally accepts the incommensurable difference between the two projects that the detective novel believes can be equated, 'gratuitous references to the real world' and 'the necessary sequence of a fictive one'.¹²⁷ In Borges' description of narrative, the 'natural' cannot coexist with the 'magical'.

The unresolvable chaos of the realm of human activity is also addressed through the form of the detective story in one of the most important Italian novels of the post-war period, contemporary with the height of the *nouveau roman*, Carlo Emilio

¹²⁶ We may also detect the influence here of the more aestheticised meaning-games played by Nabokov, which will be explored in Chapter Three.

¹²⁷ John Sturrock, *The French New Novel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p.170.

Gadda's *Quel pasticciaccio brutto de Via Merulana*.¹²⁸ The novel is known as the *Pasticciaccio* -- the great mess -- not simply because of its title, but because it portrays the mess of life in Rome under Fascism with an intensity that is matched by its own failure to stick to a coherent structure. Formally, the novel appears a mess, as important conversations are left hanging while the narrative meanders off in pursuit of some material detail, central elements drift outwards to the margins of the novel, and any hope of a solution to the murder that starts the novel is frustrated. This is more than simply a Hitchcock-style 'MacGuffin' -- a device, usually a corpse, used to engage interest in the story, only to be quietly sidelined once that interest is formed. Gadda is not uninterested in the death, it is simply that, as with Malerba after him, he wishes to illustrate how the unintelligible complexity of modern urban life, exacerbated in this case by the malignant influence of Fascist government, will defeat any human attempt to come to terms with such an event.

Gadda's detective story, like those of Robbe-Grillet and Malerba, is one that makes much greater demands of the reader than the typical genre work, but in return refuses to offer up a totalised picture of the world. Robert S. Dombroski efficiently identifies the main difference from the standard detective work as the *Pasticciaccio*'s 'proliferation, rather than condensation, of significances'.¹²⁹ In doing this, Gadda reverses the terms of the implicit agreement with the reader that underlies the detective genre. The detective story is the narrative form that most aggressively promotes the resolution of apparent chaos into an ordered picture of the world, but *Pasticciaccio* works from the expectation of a resolution into order that accompanies the reader's recognition of a detective story, to make the final realisation of disorder that much more potent. It is of critical importance to bear this in mind when assessing the adaptations of the detective story that Eco will use around thirty years later. The shock of the disordered or anti-detective story is, for the reader of serious literature, almost as exhausted as the alleged surprise of the resolution of the traditional detective narrative. Both poles of possibility have been substantially

¹²⁸ Carlo Emilio Gadda, *Quel pasticciaccio brutto de Via Merulana* (Milan: Garzanti, 1957), translated by William Weaver as *That Awful Mess in Merulana* (New York: Braziller, 1965).

¹²⁹ Robert S. Dombroski, *Properties of Writing: Ideological Discourse in Modern Italian Fiction* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1994), p.126.

explored, and so Eco's decision to offer something mediate, oscillating or indeterminate is in large part a reflection of a desire to reject simplistic viewpoints at either extreme.

The significance for Eco of Gadda's masterwork can be measured in other important areas. Most noticeable is the comparison with Joyce that is often invoked in relation to *Pasticciaccio*. This is based partly on Gadda's utilisation of different discourses, of a kind of polyglossia within the text. This, as we have seen, is something that becomes characteristic, in a more formalised manner, of much neo-avant-garde work. In Gadda's hands, however, as recently argued by Albert Sbragia, it is carnivalesque in its use of macaronic in a sense that links Gadda (as well as Celine and Joyce) to a late-medieval tradition that includes Teophilo Folengo's *Opus Macaronicum* and the works of François Rabelais.¹³⁰ When Eco mixes discourses, or introduces the polyglossia of the monk Salvatore in *The Name of the Rose*, we must appreciate that he is playing with something that appears to be a product of a post-structuralist sensibility, but in fact can be traced just as legitimately to a medieval origin. We can be sure that Eco would find this reading of Gadda stimulating, as he performs much the same historicising procedure on Joyce, demonstrating that those elements that appear the most dangerously new are often those most deeply rooted in medieval culture.¹³¹

At the same time as sharing a modern revisitation of the medieval genre of the macaronic, Gadda is perceived to perform for Rome much the same concrete memorialisation as Joyce does for Dublin in *Ulysses*, albeit not to the same level of obsessive detail, and not with the same emotional investment, as Gadda, a native of Milan, lived in Rome for only a few years. All the same, gargantuan nature of Joyce's artistic project, the near assumption of godhood that it suggests for the artist, finds some kind of Italian counterpart in Gadda's fidelity to the detail of Roman life in 1927. Eco, an open admirer of Joyce, can find in both of these hubristic recreations of the city a strong counterbalance to post-structuralist positions that can

¹³⁰ Albert Sbragia, *Carlo Emilio Gadda and the Modern Macaronic* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996).

¹³¹ See *Le poetiche di Joyce: dalla "Summa" al "Finnegans Wake"* (Milan: Bompiani, 1965), originally published as part of the first edition of *Opera aperta*, translated by Ellen Esrock as *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos: The Middle Ages of James Joyce*, note by David Robey (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989).

seem to assume that any fictional construct can have only an illusory relationship to the real world. For Joyce in particular, it is as though the city is mapped in fiction through the sheer force of his will, although of course, as with Gadda's Rome, the mapping is a reconstruction from memory of a cityscape that no longer exists in the same way. There will be cause in the analysis of *Foucault's Pendulum* to explore why these reconstructions, often associated with appropriations of the detective story, are mainly urban, but here it is important to acknowledge that Eco's attempts to realise his fictional worlds in quite concrete terms owe much to the imagined cities of Gadda and Joyce. Eco justifies the construction of *The Name of the Rose* as a 'cosmological event' by reference to claims that fiction must take on the role of a city directory. 'Perhaps', he writes, 'it must also compete with the planning board'.¹³²

Primo Levi's System and Italo Calvino's Postmodernism with Plans

Eco's argument for the partial rehabilitation of highly structured and planned fiction would look suspiciously reactionary were it not made in the context of a significant strain of recent Italian fiction that celebrates the ludic possibilities of structure. To a degree, this is simply the progressive absorption of the mechanised writing techniques of Sanguineti and Balestrini into other artistic projects, demonstrating the continuing artistic influence of the *Gruppo 63* many years after its political redundancy. The extent to which such ludic structures entered the mainstream of Italian fiction can be gauged from the case of Primo Levi.

Levi, a survivor of Auschwitz, is best known for his tortured accounts of this experience, *Se questo è un uomo* and *La tregua*.¹³³ Right up to his death in 1987 he was producing works that, in tone, form and subject matter, belong alongside the Resistance novel of the immediate post-war period. Indeed, in 1982 he wrote a novel, *Se non ora, quando?*, dealing with the resistance activities of a group of

¹³² *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, p.25.

¹³³ Primo Levi, *Se questo è un uomo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1958), translated by Stuart Woolf as *If This is a Man* (London: Orion, 1963); *La tregua* (Turin: Einaudi, 1963), translated by Stuart Woolf as *The Truce* (London: Bodley Head, 1965).

Polish and Russian refugees.¹³⁴ A clearer example of an old-style novelist *engagé*, producing essentially autobiographical work in a neo-realist style through his eagerness to be understood fully, could hardly be imagined. Levi, however, was an industrial chemist by trade, and when he came to write the memoir of his working life, *Il sistema periodico*, he adopted the controlling structure of the chemist's Periodic Table through which to recall his experiences in the trade.¹³⁵ Each chapter is symbolically governed by a chemical element, fitting the memory, anecdote or fantasy it contains into the overall system. Some of the chapters literally involve the element by which they are designated, so that the chapter labelled 'Nickel' mainly concerns a job Levi was given of extracting nickel. However, *nickel*, as Levi points out, derives from the German for a little sprite, that may reward or deceive the hopeful miner. The chapter then takes on an allegorical meaning relating to Levi's false hopes, as a Jew under Fascist rule, of continuing his chemistry in peace.

The structure of *Il sistema periodico* is, then, that of developing a portrait of Levi's life through an analogy, any analogy, from the chemical elements. As such it might appear to fall under the same criticism that Eco makes for works relying on 'Hermetic logic', whether it be a sixteenth-century *ars memoriae* treatise, or a piece of sub-Derridean deconstructionist criticism -- that they set in motion an infinite chain of signification with no thought of how to stop it. 'As long as some kind of relationship can be established,' Eco writes, using as his example Cosma Rosselli's *Thesaurus artificiosae memoriae* (Venice, 1589), 'the criterion does not matter. Once the mechanism of analogy has been set in motion there is no guarantee that it will stop'.¹³⁶

In the end, though, Levi avoids such a position through subjugating his creative powers to his patient rationalism, his belief that the chemical elements themselves are immutable and eternal, and hence capable of serving as the solid bedrock for the imaginative rethinking of his life. 'A chemist does not think,' writes Levi, 'indeed

¹³⁴ Primo Levi, *Se non ora, quando?* (Turin: Einaudi, 1982), translated by William Weaver as *If Not Now, When?* (London: Michael Joseph, 1986).

¹³⁵ Primo Levi, *Il sistema periodico* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), translated by Raymond Rosenthal as *The Periodic Table* (London: Michael Joseph, 1985).

¹³⁶ *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p.47.

does not live, without models'.¹³⁷ Part of Eco's admiration for Levi must surely stem from the chemist's realisation that his understanding of the world is formed in a dialectic between hypothesis and deductive certainty, between bewilderment and assurance, in which the tentative (that is to say, scientific) promotion of models is a constant factor. It is no accident that most of Levi's stories of chemistry are detective stories, accounts of his patient laboratory analysis of the data, his hypothesising, his moments of inspired guesswork. In this way, his pragmatic rationalism is very close to that of Sciascia.

We will see in the next chapter how closely the history of detective fiction is bound up, at least in Eco's mind, with the idea of hunting. Levi, in this respect, is a kindred spirit when he compares the chemist to a hunter, taking on the primal gamble of success or failure. He can be recognised as one of the strongest modern influences on the rhetorical tone of Eco's hunter-detective, William of Baskerville, when he displays a Sciascia-like quiet confidence in the possibility, despite everything, of success:

Non ci si deve mai sentire disarmati: la natura è immensa e complessa, ma non è impermeabile all'intelligenza; devi girarle intorno, pungere, sondare, cercare il varco o fartelo.

We must never feel disarmed: nature is immense and complex, but it is not impermeable to the intelligence; we must circle around it, pierce and probe it, look for the opening or make it.¹³⁸

Hunting, the moment of suspension between success and failure (the events that Levi reminds us were identified by Pavese as the two experiences of adult life) also plays a structural role in much of the most interesting work of the most influential Italian author of recent years, Italo Calvino. As already mentioned, Calvino's early success was with neo-realist accounts of the Resistance. However, his trilogy, *Il visconte dimezzato*, *Il barone rampante*, and *Il cavaliere inesistente*, witnessed a sharp turn away from the deliberately loose narrative shapes of the neo-realist school

¹³⁷ 'poiché un chimico non pensa, anzi non vive, senza modelli', *Il sistema periodico*, p.80; p.76.

¹³⁸ *Il sistema periodico*, p.79; p.75.

toward highly structured expositions of fabulous themes.¹³⁹ Increasingly, at a time when neo-avant-gardist writers were seeking to explore reality through accessing its chaos, Calvino engaged upon epistemological inquiries into the nature of time, perception and the past, through his idiosyncratic insistence upon order. Rather than resorting to the deliberately incoherent narrative plans of Gadda, Calvino confronts the formlessness of reality with unreal plans, elegant fictional forms that speak of reality through their inability to encompass it.

The best-known example of Calvino's generation of fantastic plans is found in the narratives of Qfwfq, a protean observer of the origins of all manner of phenomena, such as rock, birds, sex and the moon.¹⁴⁰ Qfwfq's observations are outrageously tall stories, originary myths imbued with a fine ludic quality through the narrator's self-aggrandising first-person accounts of cosmic, chemical, or evolutionary events. As with Levi's chemical re-imaginings of his life, however, Calvino's scientific fairy tales are yarns spun from an initial scientific fact or observation, such as the analogous structure of blood and sea. Qfwfq's scientific Just-So Stories are as beautifully unbelievable as those of Kipling, substituting pure playfulness for the unknowable, pure fantasy for the doomed attempt to determine the extent of the real. Calvino's immensely successful tactic, in part borrowed from Borges, is of obvious appeal to Eco, who from *La struttura assente* onwards has been arguing the utility of plans that are fantastic inasmuch as one knows from the start that they are incomplete, bastardizations of reality. At the same time, Eco is wary of the glamour of such plans, fearing that the artistry of a Calvino may be too great, the tall tales of Qfwfq becoming more persuasive than reality itself.

Calvino is not rigorous in basing his stories on scientific certitude. He is attracted more by the persuasiveness of an idea, by the power of the mental image it generates, so that Qfwfq sometimes narrates, fairly straight, a scientific unorthodoxy,

¹³⁹ Italo Calvino, *Il visconte dimezzato* (Turin: Einaudi, 1952), *Il barone rampante*, (Turin: Einaudi, 1957), *Il cavaliere inesistente* (Turin: Einaudi, 1959), collected as *I nostri antenati* (Turin: Einaudi, 1960), translated by Archibald Colquhoun as *Our Ancestors* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1980).

¹⁴⁰ Found in Italo Calvino, *Le Cosmicomiche* (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), translated by William Weaver as *Cosmicomics* (New York: Harcourt, 1968), and *Ti con zero* (Turin: Einaudi, 1967), translated by William Weaver as *Time and the Hunter (t zero in the USA)* (London: Cape, 1970).

such as the massive interchange of matter between the earth and the moon, a theory that might well belong in *Foucault's Pendulum*. It is here, where narrative pleasure completely supplants analytical rigour, that Eco will find fiction at its most troublesome, overwhelming the external world. It is rather like Borges' carefully invented world of Tlön, which in turn could almost be one of Calvino's fantasies, that eclipses the real world with its persuasive coherence. 'How could one do other than submit to Tlön,' writes Borges, 'to the minute and vast evidence of an orderly planet?'¹⁴¹

Calvino's technique for avoiding such a fate is to suspend the moment of resolution, to preserve the integrity of the fiction by ending just before it must either be destroyed by reality, or, terribly, supplant it. In other words, Calvino ducks out from the primal experience of hunting, success and failure, choosing instead to dwell in those intersections, those crossroads where everything is still possible.¹⁴² This suspension is generated graphically in the later stories from the collection *Ti con zero*, most expressively in the title story, where a hunter calculates, in a moment of frozen time, whether he, or the lion he is preparing to shoot, will emerge alive from the encounter. The more the hunter makes elaborate mathematical calculations and extrapolations of possible futures from this one moment, the more he realises that any such plan, any such attempt to map the future, is futile in the face of the concreteness of whatever will in fact happen once the moment in time has passed. Nevertheless, Calvino's hunter, like many of his other narrators, finds consolation in the possibilities available in this moment of suspension, the openness afforded by this arbitrary and temporary construct of the mind.

Such suspended fictions are of central importance as models for Eco's novels. In particular, the ludic structure generated by the Editors in *Foucault's Pendulum*, the Plan, is a Calvinoesque design, one of his fabulations that, disastrously, becomes a confabulation, an invention that substitutes for a missing account of reality. The stress that Eco is exhibiting is the semiotic theorist's concern that fiction may not

¹⁴¹ Jorge Luis Borges, 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius', in *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings*, edited by Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby (London: Penguin, 1970), p.42.

¹⁴² Teresa de Lauretis traces this sensitive positioning in terms of a play between *praxis* and *poeisis* in her article 'Narrative Discourse in Calvino: Praxis or Poeisis?', *PMLA* 90:3 (1975), 414-25.

remain as just fiction, eternally suspended in a safe narrative limbo. Calvino himself feels the same stress, but it is always deferred beyond the stories themselves. Eco, though he tries hard to achieve narrative suspension in each of his novels, is actually more engaging when he brings to fruition the crisis always implicit in these fictions. The central drama of *Foucault's Pendulum* is precisely the action of the Plan being brought crashing down from its suspended, non-committal state to a coherently paranoid interpretation. Such an action would be neither possible nor necessary were it not for the success, the elegance with which Calvino had demonstrated the suitability of narrative suspension in a post-structuralist atmosphere.

The suspension in Calvino's fables is also, obviously, a position adopted in the opposition between activity and passivity. Calvino's narratives are often entirely passive, in that they are either the recordings of a detached observer, or are recordings made in lieu of activity, a way of deferring the awful moment of decision. The extent to which this deferral can be stretched is made clear in the last story in *Ti con zero*, 'Il Conte di Montecristo', Calvino's playful homage to Dumas. It casts the sedentary, rationalising intellectual Dantès against the ever-hopeful man of action, Abbé Faria, as they both try to discover a way out of the Château d'If.

The story, from Dumas' premise, lurches into fantasy as the castle becomes an inconceivably vast structure, a metaphysical prison constructed along lines similar to the infinite library of Borges. 'The fortress has no favored points,' concludes Dantès, 'it repeats in space and time always the same combination of figures'.¹⁴³ In fact, Calvino's Château d'If is based on the infinite sphere of Pascal so powerfully described in Borges' essay, which traces the idea *inter alia* to Rabelais, Giordano Bruno and the *Corpus Hermeticum*.¹⁴⁴ The definitions that Borges traces are all similar to the formulation: 'Nature is an infinite sphere, whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere'.¹⁴⁵ This makes it an eminently serviceable symbol of the post-structuralist world, as when used by the likes of Paul Auster and Eco. Calvino's use is analogous, suggesting a rhizomatic universe with an arbitrary

¹⁴³ 'La fortezza non ha punti privilegiati: ripete nello spazio e nel tempo sempre la stessa combinazione di figure', *Ti con zero*, p.156; p.142.

¹⁴⁴ Jorge Luis Borges, 'The Fearful Sphere of Pascal', in *Labyrinths*, pp.224-7.

¹⁴⁵ *Labyrinths*, p.227.

centre. 'In whatever point I find myself', says Dantès, 'the hypersphere stretches out around me in every direction; the center is all around where I am'.¹⁴⁶

So, like Borges' library of Babel, the Château d'If becomes a model of the unmanageability of reality, a labyrinth in which there can be no ultimate orientation. Dantès cannot be at the true centre of things, only an imaginary creature such as Qfwfq can occupy such an imaginary position. Neither can he find the edge, the boundary of his prison, in order to gain an objective view of his predicament. Passively waiting until he can think his way to an escape route, Dantès tries to conceive of the structure of the fortress numerically, as William of Baskerville will determine the plan of the library from the outside. William succeeds because the library he views is a finite one, capable of external apprehension. Calvino's Dantès confronts the larger epistemological problem of knowing the structure of totality, which, as all of these writers agree, cannot be achieved even in principle.

While the Abbé Faria industriously tunnels through the prison, popping out of walls at random angles and at random times, Dantès occupies himself with the heroically Borgesian task of imagining every detail of the Château. While Faria is utterly pragmatic in his exploration, modifying his idea of the Château only in accordance with his direct experience, Dantès observes his fellow prisoner's explorations, and transforms his plan of the prison according to a paranoid outlook, assuming each obstacle to be a fragment of a larger, symmetrical, overarching pattern. He is operating in the hope that his mental state can eventually correspond completely with reality. Dantès decides that the only hope is to locate the single point where the imagined fortress does not coincide with the real one. It is only if the imagined prison conforms to the real one in the minutest detail that Dantès will concede that it is Platonically ideal, and that there is no means of escape. Dantès stands, in fact, as the archetypal detective to Faria's scientist *manqué* because he believes unquestioningly, if hopelessly, in the Scholastic principle that Michael Holquist identified as the heart of the detective model, '*adequatio rei et intellectus*, the adequation of mind to things, the belief that the mind, given enough time, can understand everything'.¹⁴⁷ It is this principle that we will see Borges, anticipating

¹⁴⁶ 'in qualsiasi punto io mi trovi l'ipersfera s'allarga intorno a me in ogni direzione; il centro è dopotutto dove io sono', *Ti con zero*, p.160; p.147.

¹⁴⁷ Holquist, p.141.

Calvino, test to destruction. It is this principle to which we will see Eco obsessively return, both to admonish as paranoid, and to admire as beautiful.

Calvino's enjoyment of the generation of possibilities, his prioritisation of the opening up of alternative views over the necessary task of foreclosing them, leads to an interesting, typically post-modernist speculation about the status of the story itself. Dantès' considerations of the structure of his situation expand to compass Dumas' construction of the novel itself. As Dantès imagines it, Dumas hires two assistants to explore all possible directions in which the nascent novel can head. 'They furnish Dumas with the outline of all the possible variants of an enormous supernovel;' he speculates, 'Dumas selects, rejects, cuts, pastes, interposes'.¹⁴⁸ In other words, this is another instance of the cut-up methods so important to the *neoavanguardia* and their kin. Dumas' supernovel, the grand narrative cut-up, is an image of totality, in that it suggests infinity in the same manner as Borges' library of Babel, which, because it contains every possible combination of letters, contains 'all that it is given to express, in all languages'.¹⁴⁹ Naturally, this completeness is soon found to be useless, as there is no principle for determining between the meaningful and the meaningless texts, between true accounts and the vastly greater number of false ones. Dantès imagines Dumas, as an ideal author, selecting between the immense number of alternative texts, but it is this selection, the definitive ruling out of the majority of possibilities, that Calvino finds difficult. Eco's fiction, as we will continue to see, follows Calvino, as well as others such as Poe and Pynchon, in that it cannot bring itself to close off these deceptive, persuasive possibilities. This is regardless of the importance that Eco places upon such a task, in *The Limits of Interpretation* and elsewhere.

The combination of alternative texts is attempted, in a typically ordered, planned manner, by Calvino himself in *Il castello dei destini incrociati*.¹⁵⁰ Here he

¹⁴⁸ 'fornisco a Dumas la trama di tutte le variante possibili d'uno smisurato iper-romanzo; Dumas sceglie, scarta, ritaglia, incolla, intersecta', *Ti con zero*, p.162; p.149.

¹⁴⁹ *Labyrinths*, p.81.

¹⁵⁰ Italo Calvino, *Il castello dei destini incrociati* (Turin: Einaudi, 1973), translated by William Weaver as *The Castle of Crossed Destinies* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976).

constructs two series of tales based on two sets of tarot cards. In both cases the cards are laid out in a symmetrical pattern by travellers struck mysteriously dumb, and then read off in lines to produce the stories of their lives through the sequences of images. The book is an *ars combinatoria*, a method of generating a potentially infinite number of stories for Calvino, although it is noticeable that the latter tales in each set are brief and repetitious -- the limiting factor is not the potential combinations of cards, but the capability of the human mind to generate distinct alternatives; distinct both in the sense of differentiated, and of being lively. 'I realized the tarots were a machine for constructing stories', he writes of the book.¹⁵¹ This is a mechanised version of Eco's famous definition of the novel as 'a machine for generating interpretations'.¹⁵² Of course, Eco's dictum relates to the reader's experience, Calvino's is all about the writer. Nevertheless, Calvino's project is closely related to the manner in which Eco increasingly relies on similar forms of *ars combinatoria* to produce his own fictions.

Il castello dei destini incrociati is particularly interesting to place in relation to Eco's fiction when we consider the type of reading that Calvino engages upon. He declines the astrological or occult symbolism usually associated with the tarot, instead relying on a simple method of 'observing what the picture portrays and establishing a meaning, which varies according to the sequence of cards into which each individual card is inserted'.¹⁵³ Calvino's use of the tarot is Cratylitic, directly referential, expressing the fantasy that simply by pointing at a card a determinate meaning can be expressed, rather than the more complex allegorical readings that we might expect to be negotiated through them. Against this, the book is shot through with an awareness of the incommunicability of intention. All of the stories are the narrator's imaginings of what the cards are used to say, acknowledging once more, despite the obvious joy with which Calvino constructs his patterns of meaningful signs, that they are utterly arbitrary.

¹⁵¹ Italo Calvino, 'Note', in *The Castle of Crossed Destinies*, p.126. Note that the English translation of Calvino's collection of essays, *Una pietra sopra: Discorsi di letteratura e società* (Turin: Einaudi, 1980), is *The Literature Machine*, translated by Patrick Creagh (London: Secker & Warburg, 1987).

¹⁵² *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, p.2.

¹⁵³ Calvino, 'Note' in *The Castle of Crossed Destinies*, p.123.

Conclusion: The Negotiation of Theory and Fiction

Calvino, the great fabulist, died in 1985, his last book being *Palomar*, a typical piece of investigation into the nature of reality.¹⁵⁴ The eponymous observer's quiet examinations of objects, such as his attempt to identify in every detail a single wave, are classically of Calvino both in their high level of structuration and their inevitable lack of success. At this time Sciascia had abandoned the writing of novels, his investigations into the real world with their own narrative arc of failure. These mournful acceptances of the limitations of fiction, always tempered in Calvino's case by a ludic pleasure, form an important part of the immediate background to the writing of Eco's own fiction. Eco, adopting the detective model from the experiments of the *neoavanguardia*, but also from the rationalist Sciascia, attempts to mediate some of the discrepancies between theory and practice through the genre. After all, the detective story is simultaneously the perfect symbol of popular culture in the twentieth century and, potentially, the most accurate fictional model for epistemological investigation.

The currency of this issue in Italian fiction during the nineteen-eighties, when Eco was in the process of becoming a novelist, can be seen in Roberto Calasso's extraordinary novel of epistemological inquiry, *La rovina di Kasch*.¹⁵⁵ The book is an inquiry into political and literary history in order to trace notions of legitimacy, origin, the philosophical justification for law. It operates frequently through devices of analogy, substitution, and an appeal to a heritage that is occult or mystical. Calasso mentions at some point or other just about every theme and subject that will turn out to be of interest to Eco, though he cannot always be said to address each area in much depth. He is more interested in building up a rhythm of reference, a regular drawing in of fresh ideas and issues to replace the ones with which he has been toying. The novel is really a textile -- a rearrangement of sources to tell a story

¹⁵⁴ Italo Calvino, *Palomar* (Turin: Einaudi, 1983), translated by William Weaver as *Mr Palomar* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1985).

¹⁵⁵ Roberto Calasso, *La rovina di Kasch* (Milan: Adelphi, 1983), translated by William Weaver and Stephen Sartarelli as *The Ruin of Kasch* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1994).

for the author, almost certainly to tell the story of the thematic movements of the author's researches.

Calasso's use of quotation bears examination in relation to Eco's method of integrating other texts into his narrative. Calasso follows this pattern to the point where any semblance of narrative in the sense of a readerly plot is surrendered under the inexorable weight of intertextual reference. Unlike Eco, Calasso clearly marks out the quotations by placing them within quotation marks, and provides precise endnotes in a pedantically academic exercise. The effect is to give the novel all kinds of historical and literary authority. Whereas Eco is interested in the transformation of data into a form of fiction, Calasso is making an attempt to transform the novel into a poeticised approach to a real philosophical issue. The subject of that approach is a factor in the method used. Calasso's approach to the absence of legitimacy, the groundlessness of European culture, is reason enough to mount an investigation in a mode of discourse that asks for no ground in reality, and ultimately offers none. Calasso can construct a narrative of coincidences, of *objets trouvées*, pieced together so as to suggest a kind of narrative that is never accessible. 'Coincidences are disturbing,' he writes, 'because they hint at fate, a network of meanings that precede us, accompany us, trick us'.¹⁵⁶

Calasso correctly traces part of the importance of the essentially urban paranoia of the twentieth century to Freud, particularly the anecdote in Freud's *Das Unheimliche* on inadvertently coming back to the same city square time after time. Of course, Freud's significance runs much more broadly than this, particularly in offering up a strain of subterranean meaning in life acceptable to the twentieth-century mindset.

Il sospetto più intollerabile, per Freud, è che fra il mondo esterno e la psiche vi sia una complicità: eppure la incontrò, nell'estuario dove le acque dell'inconscio e del mondo si mescolano. Non potendo ammettere che quella congiura implicasse un sovrappiù di significato, perché avrebbe scardinato tutta la sua costruzione, ammise che essa indicava soltanto la convergenza della natura e della psiche verso uno stesso punto: l'origine in quanto luogo dell'indifferenziato, della ripetizione insignificante, dove il significato -- come ogni tensione -- si annulla.

¹⁵⁶ Calasso, p.190.

The most intolerable suspicion, for Freud, is that there might be a complicity between the outside world and the psyche; yet he actually encountered this complicity, in the estuary where the waters of the unconscious mingle with those of the world. Unable to admit that this conspiracy involved an excess of meaning, since this would have unhinged his whole construction, he admitted only that it indicated a convergence of nature and the psyche toward the same point: the origin as the locus of the undifferentiated, of insignificant repetition, where meaning -- like every other tension -- is annulled.¹⁵⁷

The tension between the paranoid and the scientific in Freud's work is offered by Calasso as one means of understanding the desire that we have been identifying in twentieth-century fiction for an impossible return to Eden. It is a desire that we will find expressed forcefully in Eco's fiction, more forcefully than he would ever allow in his theoretical work.

At the heart of the novel is Calasso's adoption of the story of the ruin of Kasch, a Scheherezade-like African myth of origin, that is at the same time a myth of destruction. He gives the story, then Frobenius' interpretation of the story, reminding the reader instantly of the anthropological work of Lévi-Strauss, and the centrality this work comes to have in post-structuralist argument. Furthermore, the story, in which the great storyteller Far-li-mas has to tell stories to the king of Kasch, closely matches the typically Borgesian paradoxical take on the *Thousand and One Nights* where Scheherezade starts to tell her own story. Here, 'the Ruin of Kasch is one of the stories of Far-li-mas'.¹⁵⁸ Eden, the lost point of origin, where there is no more deferral of meaning, is therefore located in the realm of storytelling. Eco's turn to fiction is, then, to a significant degree, a means of constructing a modern Eden. His turn to detective fiction in particular is a means of doing so while at the same time, because of the epistemological possibilities of the genre, reserving the ability to demonstrate its falsehood. In the end, it is perhaps the ability of the detective genre to bring into crisis its own status as fiction that gives Eco the impetus to follow, in his fiction, its development.

¹⁵⁷ Calasso, p.190.

¹⁵⁸ Calasso, p.133.

CHAPTER TWO

Criminal Abduction in *The Name of the Rose*

Introduction

Critics and booksellers alike continue to profess surprise at the worldwide success of *The Name of the Rose*. Nevertheless, it is clear that, if one wished to appeal simultaneously to critical tastes and to a popular audience, the one truly appropriate genre for this would be the detective story. Aside from the genre's reputation as the academic's favourite light reading, the detective story challenges the reader to perform, in competition with the detective, close reading, to penetrate beneath the surface of events to perceive a deep structure, and to formulate almost scientific hypotheses that can tie together seemingly absurd or unrelated phenomena. Furthermore, even with the knowledge that academics of various stripes have been successful writers of detective fiction, one can hardly conceive of a more appropriate discipline from which a professor may step into writing such works than semiotics -- the study of signs.

There is barely a review or a critical study of *The Name of the Rose* that fails to make some mention of the novel in relation to the detective story, but, perhaps encouraged by a feeling that the genre is self-explanatory, remarkably few go into the matter in any depth.¹ Part of the reason for this is undoubtedly the poor state of critical writing on the detective story itself. While there is some coverage of modernist and postmodernist appropriations of the genre, studies of the 'classic' detective narrative structures have only been engaged upon occasionally, as with

¹ Some studies that engage more fully the generic issues implicit in *The Name of the Rose* are: Robbie B.H. Goh, 'In Pursuit of the Thing: Umberto Eco's Semiotics, Narrative and the Detective Story in *The Name of the Rose*', *AUMLA: Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association* 73 (1990), 24-38; Pierre L. Horn, 'The Detective Novel and the Defense of Humanism', in *Naming the Rose: Essays on Eco's 'The Name of the Rose'*, edited by M. Thomas Inge (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1988), pp.90-100; David H. Richter, 'The Mirrored World: Form and Ideology in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', in *Reading Eco*, pp.256-75.

Todorov, or for other purposes, as with the extensive discussion of Poe's 'The Purloined Letter' collected in *The Purloined Poe*.² The classic detective narrative, of the type sincerely practised from the time of Poe until the late 1930s -- the 'Golden Age of detective fiction' -- has been the subject of studies primarily by enthusiastic amateurs or the practitioners themselves.³ In many respects, Eco and Sebeok's collection, *The Sign of Three*, is the most significant contribution of recent years to a critical vocabulary of detective fiction, and yet the very obvious application of this volume to Eco's own detective fiction has not received the extensive and detailed analysis required.

The Name of the Rose lacks none of the classic elements of the detective story, although its historical setting was, at the time of publication, unusual and provocative. The aloof, perceptive and misunderstood detective is a Franciscan monk, William of Baskerville. He has, in 1327, journeyed to an unnamed abbey in northern Italy to prepare for a meeting between Michael of Cesena and the papal legation, which will debate the politically loaded question of the poverty of Christ. In tow is his faithful chronicler, Adso of Melk, a Watson to his Holmes. Upon arrival, William is charged with solving the puzzling death of an illuminator, which he eventually shows to be suicide. William begins to see dark secrets and unnatural behaviour throughout the abbey, and becomes convinced that they relate to the excessive secrecy surrounding the abbey's famous library, to which only the librarian and his assistant are granted access. Breaking into the library at night, William and Adso find it to be a deliberately confusing labyrinth, at the end of which is a closed

² John P. Muller and William J. Richardson (eds.), *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida and Psychoanalytic Reading* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1988).

³ The single most important reference for the analysis of detective fiction is the already cited essay by Michael Holquist, 'Whodunit and Other Questions: Metaphysical Detective Stories in Postwar Fiction'. Of prime relevance to this study is *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce*, edited by Umberto Eco and Thomas A. Sebeok (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983). See also Dennis Porter, *The Pursuit of Crime: Art and Ideology in Detective Fiction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), and Stefano Tani, *The Doomed Detective: The contribution of the Detective Novel to Postmodern American and Italian Fiction* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984). On the history of the detective story, see Julian Symons, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel: A History* (London: Faber, 1972) and Howard Haycraft, *Murder for Pleasure: The Life and Times of the Detective Story* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1941).

room, the *finis Africae*.⁴ William's suspicions appear to be confirmed when more deaths start to occur, often linked to the pursuit of a mysterious book -- which turns out to be the only surviving copy of the second book of Aristotle's *Poetics*, on laughter. However, the deaths also appear to relate to the seven trumpets mentioned in the Revelation of Saint John, which all are convinced indicates the arrival of the Antichrist and the imminence of the Biblical apocalypse. The investigations are diverted and hampered by the arrival of the inquisition, in the form of Bernardo Gui, who declares that the deaths are the fault of heretic monks in league with the Devil. It is only when the deaths continue that William regains the initiative, and finally enters the *finis Africae*, to confront his adversary, the ancient, blind Jorge of Burgos. In order to prevent others from reading the book, which might provide them with authority to laugh and hence to doubt the literal truth of the Scripture, Jorge had poisoned the pages of the book. The apparent design of the series of deaths was, in fact, mostly the result of monks attempting to read the forbidden text. In the confusion of Jorge's attempt to finally destroy the book, the library catches fire and burns down the abbey, taking the unique volume with it. A form of order is thus restored through William's investigations, the adversary is dead, and all the mysteries appear to have been solved.

At the same time, however, as the novel seems to offer a classically consolatory ending, if tinged with sadness and intimations of mortality, there is a constant awareness that it is inevitably engaged in a discourse on the level of post-structuralist arguments on the arbitrariness of signification and the absence of universal criteria of truth and meaning. This is signalled by the manner in which the novel, even its title, challenges the reader to a piece of detective work that promises only ambiguity. '*The Name of the Rose*' refers to the hexameter, from *De Contemptu Mundi* by Bernard of Morlay (also known as Bernard of Cluny), that closes the novel.⁵ '*Stat*

⁴ The *finis Africae* is the last, central, room in one tower of the library. It houses the books by African writers or referring to African subjects, such as monsters, unicorns, and Arabic authors. It is, therefore, the appropriate location for a book considered dangerous, a copy of an Aristotelian work preserved by an Arabic scholar.

⁵ See *Scorn for the World: Bernard of Cluny's 'De Contemptu Mundi'*, translated by Ronald E. Pepin, Medieval Texts and Studies No. 8 (East Lansing, Michigan: Colleagues Press, 1991).

rosa pristina nomine, nomina nuda tenemus can be translated as: 'The original rose endures in its name, we have the names alone'.⁶ This, in the context of the novel, and as an intertextual reference placed in a prominent position by a writer engaged in the post-structuralist debate on intentionality and the arbitrariness of signification, can only indicate that interpretation is difficult, elusive, and perhaps never capable of conclusion. Such an inference is evidently meaningful in a detective novel which is, after all, about discovering the truth. But how can we fit the apparent adoption of such a post-structuralist stance together with the fact that Eco has written a coherent detective novel? We can only answer this by examining closely exactly what kind of detective novel *The Name of the Rose* really is.

Hoofprints in the Snow

In his article 'Clues: Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes', anthologised by Eco and Thomas Sebeok in *The Sign of Three*, Carlo Ginzburg attempts to piece together a genealogy for the development of what he calls the conjectural paradigm.⁷ This is, he says, the belief that 'reality is opaque; but there are certain points -- clues, symptoms -- which allow us to decipher it.'⁸ This apparently straightforward formulation is a key philosophical position for the types of interpretive play in which Eco's fictions, and especially *The Name of the Rose*, engage. Ginzburg's thesis is based on a comparative examination of the writings of Sigmund Freud, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, and the art critic Giovanni Morelli. It demonstrates that by the end of the nineteenth century this essentially semiotic approach, powered by the adoption of the symptomatologically based model of medicine, had reached expression in a wide variety of social sciences. Ginzburg's

⁶ *The Name of the Rose*, p.503; p.502.

⁷ Carlo Ginzburg, 'Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method', in *The Sign of Three*, p.88. The original Italian version of this essay appeared in A. Gargani (ed.), *Crisi della ragione* (Torino: Einaudi, 1979), pp.59-106. Although a revised version appears in Ginzburg's collection *Myths, Emblems, Clues* in 1986, I will cite from *The Sign of Three*, as it is contemporary with the writing of *The Name of the Rose*.

⁸ *The Sign of Three*, p.109.

choice of his three avatars for the conjectural paradigm is particularly apposite, then, as he notes:

Freud was a doctor; Morelli had a degree in medicine; Conan Doyle had been a doctor before settling down to write. In all three cases we can invoke the model of medical semiotics or symptomatology - the discipline which permits diagnosis, though the disease cannot be directly observed, on the basis of superficial symptoms or signs.⁹

Freud's work uses symptomatology directly for determining the psychological state of the patient. Morelli controversially used tiny details of anatomy as indicators for determining attribution for paintings by old masters. Holmes' version of the method, as generated by his author, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, operates through the medium of the tiny detail, or clue. In 'A Case of Identity', Holmes bemoans the typically inept attempts at investigation by his chronicler and sidekick, Dr Watson. 'Never trust to general impressions, my boy,' he chides, 'but concentrate yourself on details'.¹⁰ In a similar sequence in the novel, *The Sign of Four*, he complains that Watson does not 'observe the small facts upon which large inferences may depend'.¹¹

This reliance on tiny external signs, as though the crime were a disease recognisable only through its symptoms, is partly, as Ginzburg argues, an expression of the *zeitgeist*. However, close analysis of the Holmes stories themselves shows that the fashion for symptomatology is only one factor in the construction of Holmes' detective style. At least as important is Conan Doyle's conscious placement of his detective within a short but coherent tradition of fictional sleuths. This is to some extent indicated by the explicit comparisons made within the stories between Holmes and other fictional detectives. Upon first hearing from Holmes a description of his method, Dr. Watson exclaims that 'you remind me of Edgar Allen Poe's Dupin. I

⁹ *The Sign of Three*, p.87.

¹⁰ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'A Case of Identity', in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (London: George Newnes, 1892), edition cited (London: Leopard, 1996), p.79.

¹¹ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Sign of Four* (London: Blackett, 1890), edition cited (London: Leopard, 1996), p.20.

had no idea that such individuals did exist outside of stories'.¹² Holmes acerbically, and as we will later see, unfairly, retorts:

Now, in my opinion, Dupin was a very inferior fellow. That trick of his of breaking in on his friends' thoughts with an apropos remark after a quarter of an hour's silence is really very showy and superficial. He had some analytical genius, no doubt; but he was by no means such a phenomenon as Poe appeared to imagine.¹³

The name of Gaboriau's detective character is met with similar criticism. 'Lecoq was a miserable bungler', snaps Holmes.¹⁴ Of course, each intertextual reference indicates that Conan Doyle is aware of his precursors, and willing to match his detective against theirs. Nevertheless, Holmes, by calling upon the methods and tricks of Dupin, places himself in a tradition of thought that extends at least as far back as Poe. This debt is one that was owned by Conan Doyle, even if the great detective was too arrogant to concede it. In his autobiographical *Memories and Adventures*, Conan Doyle wrote that 'Gaboriau had rather attracted me by the neat dovetailing of his plots, and Poe's masterful detective, M. Dupin, had from boyhood been one of my heroes.'¹⁵

Poe's 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', first published in April 1841, is usually taken to be the first detective story. This is true not only in terms of its lasting influence, but inasmuch as no previous story involves the investigation of an apparent crime by what may be identified as forensic methods. This, however, is not the only possible criterion for deciding on a point of origin. Julian Symons identifies a division between 'those who say that there could be no detective stories until organized police and detective forces existed, and those who find examples of

¹² Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (London: Ward, Lock, 1888), edition cited (London: Leopard, 1996), p.31.

¹³ *A Study in Scarlet*, p.31.

¹⁴ *A Study in Scarlet*, p.32.

¹⁵ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *Memories and Adventures* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1924), p.74.

rational deduction in sources as various as the Bible and Voltaire, and suggest that these were early puzzles in detection'.¹⁶

Symons is not convinced by the latter argument, noting that 'the puzzle is vital to the detective story but is not a detective story in itself.'¹⁷ It is clear, however, that in terms of a formal analysis of the logic utilised in such stories, there is a case to be made the other way. For Carlo Ginzburg, the seed of Dupin's method (and therefore that of Holmes, and ultimately that of William of Baskerville) is indubitably contained in the third chapter of Voltaire's *Zadig*, where Zadig infers the recent passage through the forest of a dog and a horse from the tracks left behind.¹⁸ Ginzburg asserts that 'in these lines [from *Zadig*] and those that followed, lies the embryo of the detective story. They inspired Poe and Gaboriau directly, and perhaps indirectly Conan Doyle.'¹⁹

Even if the behaviour of Conan Doyle's creation cannot be directly linked to the episode in Voltaire, it can be linked indirectly, not least retrospectively through the aggregating medium of *The Name of the Rose*.²⁰ The first example of Holmes 'on the case' comes in *A Study in Scarlet*. As he leaves the scene of the crime, Holmes disdainfully turns to the two baffled detectives present, and says:

There has been murder done, and the murderer was a man. He was more than six feet high, was in the prime of life, had small feet for his height, wore coarse, square-toed boots and smoked a Trichonopoly cigar. He came here with his victim in a four-wheeled cab, which was

¹⁶ Symons, p.24.

¹⁷ Symons, p.24. A similar conclusion is reached by Howard Haycraft in *Murder for Pleasure*, p.6.

¹⁸ Voltaire, 'Zadig or destiny', in *Zadig and other romances*, translated by H.I. Woolf and Wilfred S. Jackson, introduction and notes by H.I. Woolf (New York: Rarity, 1931). Eco also makes an extensive quotation, for much the same purpose as Ginzburg, from this episode in his article 'Horns, Hooves, Insteps: Some Hypotheses on Three Types of Abduction', Chapter Ten in *The Sign of Three*, pp.198-220.

¹⁹ *The Sign of Three*, p.102.

²⁰ Ginzburg traces the story back to the mid-sixteenth century collection *Peregrinaggio di tre giovani figliuoli del re Serendippo*. See *The Sign of Three*, p.102.

drawn by a horse with three old shoes and one new one on his off fore-leg. In all probability the murderer had a florid face, and the finger-nails of his right hand were remarkably long. These are only a few indications, but they may assist you.²¹

The equivalent moment in *Zadig* comes when courtiers ask the eponymous protagonist whether he has seen first the queen's bitch, then the king's horse. Zadig describes the dog, then proceeds to provide a Holmesian picture of the horse that he himself has never seen:

'The horse you are looking for is the best galloper in the stable,' answered Zadig. 'It is fifteen hands high, and has a very small hoof. Its tail is three and a half feet long. The studs on its bit are of twenty-three carat gold, and its shoes of eleven scruple silver.'²²

In the same manner that Holmes describes a murderer that he has never himself seen, Zadig is able to provide a convincing picture of the horse, even though he is able to truthfully declare that he has neither seen nor heard of it. The similarity in method is reinforced when Holmes and Zadig come to explain their extraordinary proclamations. Just as Holmes patiently explains to the perpetually astonished Dr Watson how, for example, he measured the height of the murderer by the length of his stride, Zadig reveals his train of thought to a disbelieving audience:

As regards the king of king's horse, you may know that as I walked along the road in this wood I saw the marks of horse-shoes, all equal distances apart. That horse, said I, gallops perfectly. The dust on the trees in this narrow road only seven feet wide was raised a little right and left three and a half feet from the middle of the road. This horse, said I, has a tail three and a half feet long, and its movement right and left has swept up this dust. I saw beneath the trees, which made a cradle five feet high, some leaves newly fallen from the branches, and I recognised that this horse had touched there and was hence fifteen hands high.²³

²¹ *A Study in Scarlet*, p.44.

²² Voltaire, p.9.

²³ Voltaire, p.10-11.

With this piece of semiotic magic, a classic deployment of the conjectural paradigm, Zadig establishes himself as the grandfather of the fictional detective. It is only now, with this brief history of the detective story in place, that we are properly prepared to see the detective in *The Name of the Rose* at work. The first exposure to the methods of Eco's detective comes in the first chapter proper of the narrative of Adso of Melk, after the apparent translator's note and Adso's prologue to the main narrative. William of Baskerville -- whose name, echoing *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, so obviously refers us back to Sherlock Holmes -- has not even arrived at the abbey where the rest of the novel is set when he is called upon to display his powers of reasoning. He encounters a search party, as in *Zadig*, and without having seen what they seek, is immediately able to provide the searchers with the information that they require:

"Suvvia," disse Guglielmo, "è evidente che state cercando Brunello, il cavallo preferito dall'Abate, il miglior galoppatore della vostra scuderia, nero di pelo, alto cinque piedi, dalla coda sontuosa, dallo zoccolo piccolo e rotondo ma dal galoppo assai regolare; capo minuto, orecchie sottili ma occhi grandi. È andato a destra, vi dico, e affrettatevi, in ogni caso."

"Come, come," William said, "it is obvious you are hunting for Brunellus, the abbot's favorite horse, fifteen hands, the fastest in your stables, with a dark coat, a full tail, small round hoofs, but a very steady gait; small head, sharp ears, big eyes. He went to the right, as I said, but you should hurry in any case."²⁴

This is not just a reference to, but a virtual reprise of, the description of the king's horse in *Zadig*, which was also fifteen hands, small hoofed, with a large tail and a perfect galloper. The parallel in continued when William inevitably explains his reasoning to his Dr. Watson-like sidekick, the novice monk Adso:

Al trivio, sulla neve ancora fresca, si disegnavano con molta chiarezza le impronte degli zoccoli di un cavallo, che puntavano verso il sentiero alla nostra sinistra. A bella e uguale distanza l'uno dall'altro, quei segni dicevano che lo zoccolo era piccolo e rotondo, e il galoppo di grande regolarità -- così che ne dedussi la natura del cavallo, e il fatto che esso non correva disordinatamente come fa un animale

²⁴ *The Name of the Rose*, p.31; p.23.

imbizzarrito. Là dove i pini formavano come una tettoia naturale, alcuni rami erano stati spezzati di fresco giusto all'altezza di cinque piedi. Uno dei cespugli di more, là dove l'animale deve aver girato per infilare il sentiero alla sua destra, mentre fieramente scuoteva la sua bella coda, tratteneva ancora tra gli spini dei lunghi crini nerissimi.

At the crossroads, on the still-fresh snow, a horse's hoofprints stood out very neatly, heading for the path to our left. Neatly spaced, those marks said that the hoof was small and round, and the gallop quite regular -- and so I deduced the nature of the horse, and the fact that it was not running wildly like a crazed animal. At the point where the pines formed a natural roof, some twigs had been freshly broken off at a height of five feet. One of the blackberry bushes where the animal must have turned to take the path to his right, proudly switching his handsome tail, still held some long horsehairs in its brambles.²⁵

The hoofprints, their characteristic evenness, the height of the horse gauged from damaged trees, and the evidence of the tail are all significant and precise points of correspondence to the methods of identification in *Zadig*. There are not quite as many correspondences as required by the forensic fingerprinting system to make an formal identification, but for the purposes of literary criticism, the link between what I shall refer to as the Brunellus episode in *The Name of the Rose* and Voltaire's *Zadig* is undeniable. The comparison of textual criticism, or interpretation, with detection is something to which there will be many reasons to return, but for now it is sufficient to finish pinning down this minor 'whodunit', the source of the Brunellus episode. The traditional detective story requires the identification of the means, the opportunity and the motive to identify the culprit. We already know the means -- the numerous parallels between the two texts. The opportunity is also evident -- the marrying of Voltaire with Poe and Conan Doyle as the originators of the detective paradigm in Ginzburg's article. What is missing is the motive. Why the intertextual references? Why does this episode preface the main story of *The Name of the Rose*?

The prime motivation, as illustrated by the similarities between *Zadig* and *A Study in Scarlet*, is to place William of Baskerville in a self-consciously archetypical scenario for the literary detective. The same patterns can be detected in Voltaire as

²⁵ *The Name of the Rose*, p.32; p.24.

in Conan Doyle, and Poe, and others too if we look. The identification of the horse is as much a recreation by Eco of an *ur*-text of the detective story, a Platonic form that originates all subsequent detective stories, as it is a reference to Voltaire's story *per se*.

Incidentally, this means that Eco is agreeing with his colleague Ginzburg in tracing the evidential method further back than Poe. Of no little importance is the reliance on physical signs, marks left on the ground, the evidence of vegetation, the clues given by precipitation (snow in Eco's case, rain in *A Study in Scarlet*). Eco deliberately uses signs that not only reflect *Zadig*, but also conspire to throw credence on Ginzburg's hypothesis as to the ultimate origin of the evidential method. Ginzburg's thesis is that clue-gathering is the essential tool of hunting -- following tracks, and inferring from these the existence and behaviour of something you cannot at this moment observe. Ginzburg's description of hunting may itself occupy for Eco the position of *ur*-text for the detective tradition:

For thousands of years mankind lived by hunting. In the course of endless pursuits, hunters used to reconstruct the appearance and movements of an unseen quarry through its tracks - prints in soft ground, snapped twigs, droppings, snagged hairs or feathers, smells, puddles, threads of saliva. They learned to sniff, to observe, to give meaning and context to the slightest trace.²⁶

Eco is, in effect, demonstrating Ginzburg's argument. The detective persistently returns to reading natural signs, like a hunter tracking an animal. In this instance, as in *Zadig*, it is literalised. This point is later reinforced when William lectures Adso on his investigative technique by reference to Aristotle. 'Solving a mystery', he says, 'is not the same as deducing from first principles'.²⁷ In fact, the example he uses -- the case of horned animals -- is used by Eco himself in his contribution to the volume *The Sign of Three*.²⁸ This is, of course, significant in Eco's

²⁶ *The Sign of Three*, p.88.

²⁷ 'risolvere un mistero non è la stessa cosa che dedurre da principi primi', *The Name of the Rose*, p.307; p.304.

²⁸ Umberto Eco, 'Horns, Hooves, Insteps', in *The Sign of Three*, pp.198-202.

assessment of the logical background to detective fiction. For now, however, it confirms that we are following the right tracks.

If the subject of William's detection is peculiarly apposite to the detective tradition, the manner of his detection could hardly be more characteristic of the classic detective story. The passage where he describes his reasoning follows the reasoning itself, but is, dramatically speaking, an entirely different scene. After the public exposition of the location and nature of the horse Brunellus, William reveals his methods to Adso in private conference. The reader thus experiences both sides of the single incident of the detective's reasoning. First, it is seen from the outside, with the reader as part of the crowd amazed by the detective's acumen, but incredulous as to the accuracy of his predictions. It is subsequently presented to the reader in the form of the thought-processes of the detective, as described to his companion. The effect is to create the mystique and showiness necessary for the effective detective character, but to immediately follow this with a demonstration of the accuracy of his predictions. Eco grants his narrator, Adso, an awareness of the techniques being employed to aggrandise his master, when he notes that William slowed his horse to give the search party time to tell the rest of the abbey about his detective work:

Infatti avevo avuto modo di accorgermi che il mio maestro, in tutto e per tutto uomo di altissima virtù, indulgeva al vizio della vanità quando si trattava di dar prova del suo acume e, avendone già apprezzato le doti di sottile diplomatico, capii che voleva arrivare alla meta proceduto da una solida fama di uomo sapiente.

I had already realized that my master, in every respect a man of the highest virtue, succumbed to the vice of vanity when it was a matter of demonstrating his acumen; and having learned to appreciate his gifts as a subtle diplomatist; I understood that he wanted to reach his destination preceded by a firm reputation as a man of knowledge.²⁹

This carries a double sense. William's destination is the abbey, but he also has a teleology -- a destiny as a fictional detective in the classic mould. His destination is the plot of the novel, specifically the uncovering of the perpetrator of the yet to be revealed crimes. His reputation is being formed in the eyes of the monks at the

²⁹ *The Name of the Rose*, p.31; p.23.

abbey, but it is also being formed for the reader. This is exactly the form taken in Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet*, where Chapter Three ends with the Parthian shot of Holmes' description of the murderer. Chapter Four correspondingly begins with Holmes describing his method to Watson, demarcating the two events as separate but complementary operations in the overall procedure of establishing Holmes' character. The same procedure is repeated time after time by Holmes, including the instance in *The Resident Patient* where Holmes seeks to outdo Poe's Dupin in reading his friend's thoughts. The use of this same device in Poe and Conan Doyle makes it clear that the opening gambit of demonstrating the detective's abilities in a situation unrelated to the main plot is an effective one, central to the operation of the classical detective story.

It can be concluded, then, that the Brunellus episode serves several purposes in *The Name of the Rose*. Firstly, it pays some of Eco's literary and intellectual debts, particularly to Conan Doyle and Carlo Ginzburg. In doing so it conjures up the ghosts of other detectives for the reader, to indicate that they are to be borne in mind throughout the novel. Eco is placing William of Baskerville within a tradition of fictional detectives, and the Brunellus episode is a presentation made to the reader of Eco's conception of the *ur-text* of the detective story, against which to measure William of Baskerville.

On the next level, the episode serves the same purpose as equivalent episodes in Poe's 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' and various Sherlock Holmes stories from *A Study in Scarlet* to William's namesake *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, in which Holmes guesses the identity of the owner of a walking stick left in his rooms. This is to give the reader a virtuoso display of the detective work that can be expected in the rest of the novel, a 'master-piece', the novel in miniature to give an idea of the craftwork to come, a dumb show to indicate the type of story that we shall see. The essential component is the element of trust that this 'master-piece' creates between author and reader, a contract that promises not only artfulness and imagination from the detective, but also accuracy.

Crucially, the novel is creating what Eco would term the Model Reader. This Eco defines as a possible reader foreseen by the author and 'supposedly able to deal interpretatively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively

with them'.³⁰ In *The Name of the Rose*, this Model Reader will perceive the rest of the text according to a plan worked out by a crude form of inductive reasoning. The rationale is as follows. The author (or his avatar, the detective) has provided an instance where events appear to be inexplicable, then explains them. The author, whilst undoubtedly concealing particulars, is unlikely to directly deceive the reader. This gives us the principle of 'fair play' so important to the Golden Age detective story. It is therefore reasonable for the reader to expect that on each subsequent occasion where events appear inexplicable, a rational explanation will eventually be forthcoming along the lines indicated by the detective. This inductive result is usually confirmed by another one operating at a higher level of generality. The reader has probably experienced this pattern before, in other detective stories, and has not been disappointed in these expectations. It is therefore reasonable to transfer the same expectations, the same model of reading, to a new story which displays at its start the characteristic features of the detective story, particularly an opening gambit of the profoundly traditional type that we find in *The Name of the Rose*.

It is this conjectural confidence that will be put into question in the course of *The Name of the Rose*. It is appropriate that, as we shall see, the conjectural paradigm of the detective story, that most fictionally based of interpretive beliefs, will be questioned, in a fiction, with regard to its applicability outside fiction. That interrogation of the detective paradigm is enacted by a substantial reconstruction, already initiated in the novel's opening gambit of the genealogy of the detective story. The next step is to complete the reconstruction of that genealogy.

The effect of Ginzburg's postulation of the conjectural paradigm, as enacted by Eco in the Brunellus episode, is not simply to place the detective story at a historical moment where its development reflects cultural procedures around it. Ginzburg also argues powerfully for the conjectural paradigm to be seen as something inherent and fundamental to human activity. Eco's adaptation of Ginzburg is a reminder that the genealogy he develops of the detective story is itself a sign of something broader. The detective story is a model for the human activity of conjectural interpretation,

³⁰ *The Role of the Reader*, p.7. Eco's Model Reader is one entry in a substantial range of attempts at describing this aspect of reading. Not the least of these is found in Wolfgang Iser's *The Implied Reader* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1974), Eco usefully traces the genealogy of this idea of the implied reader in *The Limits of Interpretation*, pp.46-7.

and it should be brought back to this level once it has been projected as a structure within itself. Eco's use of the detective story is not its own end. *The Name of the Rose* is not simply a meta-detective story, or rather, a meta-detective story is ultimately of broader significance than simply to detective stories.

Detection as Abduction

Ginzburg's conjectural paradigm has already indicated how the Holmesian method of detection may be usefully descriptive of other semiotic exercises. Eco and Sebeok anthologized Ginzburg's article in a collection the prime purpose of which was to illustrate how the methods of both Holmes and Poe's Chevalier Dupin could be efficiently described in terms offered by the American philosopher Charles S. Peirce. When Eco quotes the *Zadig* episode, his first observation is to link one of the eponymous protagonist's comments back to the long-standing idea that the world is a legible text -- a book. 'No one is happier', says Zadig, 'than a philosopher who reads in this great book that God has placed before our eyes'.³¹

This formulaic description of the relation between realm of the divine (or perfect) and the secondary, textual nature of the material world is one of enormous significance to the process of interpretation, to the extent that it governs even the possibility of interpretation. It can be seen immediately how this view of nature as God's book (containing His works, as opposed to His word, contained in Scripture) may be profitably compared with the post-structuralist idea of reality as essentially textual.³² The idea of world-as-book is explicitly brought to the fore of *The Name of the Rose* by William of Baskerville, especially in the early stages of the novel, describing the basis upon which he feels able to read the signs of crime. 'Snow, dear Adso,' he says while examining the corpse of Venantius on the second day, 'is an

³¹ Voltaire, p.8.

³² This link is made by several commentators on the novel, of which the most appreciative of the medieval perspective is Teresa Coletti. See Chapter Five of her *Naming the Rose*, especially pp.159-164. More generally, see *On the Medieval Theory of Signs*.

admirable parchment on which men's bodies leave very legible writing'.³³ This deliberately echoes one of William's first statement on his method, when he reveals to Adso how he identified the horse Brunellus. 'During our whole journey', he chides, 'I have been teaching you to recognize the signs through which the world speaks to us like a great book'.³⁴ He then quotes Alan of Lille as authority for this idea, as Adso will later paraphrase Hugh of St. Victor when he says that 'the whole universe is surely like a book written by the finger of God'.³⁵

These references stand alongside many other ways in which semiotic ideas are expressed through classical philosophy and scholastic logic, such as William's use of Aristotle to describe the process of hypothesis. These all serve the dual, and essential, purpose of establishing William's method as based in authentic medieval thought, and at the same time instantly identify William as a detective operating according to a method recognisably belonging to the Golden Age of detective fiction. The link can be seen in the Sherlock Holmes themselves. In *A Study in Scarlet*, where it is revealed that Holmes has published an article on the extrapolation of one fact from the existence of others (i.e. speculative hypothesis) entitled 'The Book of Life'. Holmes, in effect, proposes his method as a recognisably medieval method of reading the world.

Although individual contributors to the book take varying positions, the editorial thrust of *The Sign of Three* is clearly to correct 'the idea that Holmes's method hovered somewhere midway between deduction and induction'.³⁶ Their point is that the great detective's employment of 'deduction' (as well as those of Zadig, Dupin, and other fictional detectives) is actually that described by C.S. Peirce as

³³ 'La neve, caro Adso, è una ammirevole pergamena sulla quale i corpi degli uomini lasciano scritture leggibilissime', *The Name of the Rose*, p.113; p.105.

³⁴ 'È tutto il viaggio che ti insegno a riconoscere le tracce con cui il mondo ci parla come un grande libro', *The Name of the Rose*, p.31; p.23. The use of 'le tracce' implies both signs in the abstract sense and in the more immediate sense of footprints or tracks, again pointing back both to hunting and generic detective activity.

³⁵ 'tutto l'universo mondo, che chiaramente è quasi un libro scritto dal dito di Dio', *The Name of the Rose*, p.282; p.279.

³⁶ Umberto Eco and Thomas A. Sebeok, 'Preface', in *The Sign of Three*, p.viii.

'abduction'.³⁷ Abduction can perhaps most concisely be explained by contrast with deduction (which deduces a logical consequence, as in a standard syllogism), and induction (which extrapolates a state of affairs to suggest that it represents, in a consistent world, a rule about other similar states of affairs). 'Deduction proves that something *must* be;' declared Peirce, 'Induction shows that something *actually* is operative; Abduction merely suggests that something *may be*'.³⁸ Abduction is essentially the process of hypothesis. 'Upon finding himself confronted with a phenomenon unlike what he would have expected under the circumstances', he wrote elsewhere, the observer

looks over its features and notices some remarkable character or relation among them, which he at once recognizes as being characteristic of some conception with which his mind is already stores, so that a theory is suggested which would *explain* (that is, render necessary) that which is surprising in the phenomenon.³⁹

William virtually defines abduction when, yet again, he finds reason to explain his methods to Adso. He warns him that it does not

amount simply to collecting a number of particular data from which to infer a general law. It means, rather, facing one or two or three particular data apparently with nothing in common, and trying to imagine whether they could represent so many instances of a general law you don't yet know, and which perhaps has never been pronounced.⁴⁰

³⁷ The contributions by Thomas A. Sebeok, Sebeok & Jean Umiker-Sebeok, Marcello Truzzi, Massimo A. Bonfantini & Giampaolo Proni, Gian Paolo Carettini, Nancy Harrowitz, and Umberto Eco all explicitly make this link between Holmes and Peirce's theory. On the theory of abduction itself, see K.T. Fann, *Peirce's Theory of Abduction* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970).

³⁸ Charles S. Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. by Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss, and Arthur W. Burks, 8 vols (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935-1966) V, Para. 171. Subsequent references to the *Collected Papers* follow the convention of citing volume and paragraph number, as in (5:171).

³⁹ Peirce, *Collected Papers* (2:776).

⁴⁰ E non equivale neppure a raccogliere tanti dati particolari per poi inferirne una legge generale. Significa piuttosto trovarsi di fronte a uno, o due, or tre dati particolari che apparentemente non hanno nulla

This would all be little more than an intertextual nod to Eco's involvement in the theorising of detective fiction, were it not that Peirce believed that abductive hypotheses were something more than mere guesswork. Abductive guesses are blessed with some kind of guarantee of accuracy because, Peirce believed, the human mind was formed so as to read the world accurately. He wrote that

according to the doctrine of chances it would be practically impossible for any being, by pure chance to guess the cause of any phenomenon [and so there can] be no reasonable doubt that man's mind, having been developed under the influence of the laws of nature, for that reason naturally thinks somewhat after nature's pattern.⁴¹

Abduction becomes, for Peirce, 'a means of communication between man and his Creator, a "divine privilege" which must be cultivated'.⁴² Again we return, this time at the end of the nineteenth century, to the pervasive idea of the world of signs as a text through which the divine, pure knowledge, may be reached. We must bear in mind that Eco, as a theorist not only aware of post-structuralist arguments about the arbitrariness of all signification, but also implicated in this theoretical development, nevertheless chooses to begin his first novel with explicit references to medieval theories of interpretation that proclaim the opposite. Clearly, if abductive reasoning can establish a reliable basis of communication between humanity and the world, and its Creator, then by extension it can guarantee, at least to an extent, communication between humans. In fact, the subtlest aspect of William of Baskerville's detective work in the Brunellus episode illustrates precisely this corollary.

in comune, e cercare di immaginare se possano essere tanti casi di una legge generale che non conosci ancora, e che forse non è mai stata enunciata.

-- *The Name of the Rose*, p.307; p.304.

⁴¹ Charles S. Peirce, 'Guessing', in *The Hound and Horn* 2 (1929), 267-282, 269. On these claims of Peirce's about the human mind, see Thomas A. Sebeok and Jean Umiker-Sebeok, '"You Know My Method": A Juxtaposition of Charles S. Peirce and Sherlock Holmes', in *The Sign of Three*, pp.11-54, especially p.17.

⁴² Charles S. Peirce, *The New Elements of Mathematics by Charles S. Peirce*, edited by Carolyn Eisele, 4 vols. (Mouton: The Hague, 1976), III, p.206.

After he has explained to Adso how he knew that the monks were looking for a horse, deriving its basic characteristics from the physical traces left in the snow, William has to explain how he knew other characteristics that would not leave physical signs, such as the horse's name. Adso interrogates him about these features, such as a small head and large eyes. 'I am not sure he has those features,' William replies, 'but no doubt the monks firmly believe he does'.⁴³ This is because William has already inferred that the horse must be the finest in the stables from the intensity of the search, and is ready to draw further conclusions from the same observation. 'A monk who considers a horse excellent, whatever his natural forms,' William explains, 'can only see him as the auctoritates have described him'.⁴⁴ This includes naming him Brunellus, as in the scholastic examples of logic.

What William is reading here is not the world *per se*, but the minds of men. More precisely, he is reading the minds of a familiar category of men (monks) as they read the world. That he is able to do this is substantially due to the predictability of the experiential world of the monks, and the homogeneity of the world-view shared between them. William's mind-reading trick, despite a certain amount of humorous improbability, therefore stands at the more acceptable end of a continuum of similar mind-reading tricks performed by Golden Age detectives. It stands comparison to similar episodes in Poe and Conan Doyle, which are specifically used as medallions of the detective's art. 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' famously has Dupin predict precisely what his friend is thinking for several minutes, merely by observing what is seen and encountered in that time, while noting physiognomic reactions. Because Dupin is able to understand how the human mind structures its world, he can follow the causal chain of thoughts with complete success. As we have seen, Sherlock Holmes makes disparaging reference to this, before demonstrating in 'The Resident Patient' precisely the same ability. William of Baskerville's successful application of a slightly more measured version of this very trick steers him safely through the opening gambit of *The Name of the Rose*,

⁴³ 'Non so se li abbia, ma certo i monaci lo credono fermamente', *The Name of the Rose*, p.32; p.24.

⁴⁴ 'E un monaco che considera un cavallo eccellente, al di là delle forme naturali, non può non vederlo così come le auctoritates glielo hanno descritto', *The Name of the Rose*, p.32; p.24.

and through the opening exchanges of his conflict with the unknown force of evil in the abbey, leading him also to a correct identification of the death of Adelmo of Otranto as suicide. The novel is clearly calling upon a Model Reader well versed in the mechanisms of detective fiction, and willing to accept the conjectural paradigm as an unproblematically operative mechanism, at least in fiction. It is only as the novel gradually calls upon other types of detective, and other views of the basic abductive interpretive methods of the Golden Age detective, that the expectations of this Model Reader (if not necessarily of the empirical reader) are challenged and brought under a more destructive critical analysis.

A Chronology of Detectives

At this point, having become certain of the centrality of the detective figure to the philosophical movement of *The Name of the Rose*, it becomes increasingly difficult to ignore the precise, local, manner of the incarnation of that figure. William of Baskerville, sleuthing his way through the novel by means of immediately familiar tropes, is a traditional detective placed before the origins of the tradition.⁴⁵ Understanding him as such, watching his reliable -- and, eventually, unreliable -- abductions, seeing him interpret according to Ginzburg's conjectural paradigm, tells us a great deal about the interpretive positions being insistently prodded through the course of the novel. Much more is gained by acknowledging that the detective tradition, examined in detail, yields a set of precise models for William that are more illuminating than treating him as an embodiment of the *ur*-detective/hunter conjured by Ginzburg. Just as the novel follows through the great medieval argument on the

⁴⁵ Naturally, although Symons may be correct in that the idea of the fictional detective does not predate the invention of modern police forces, there is nothing to stop modern authors from setting detective fiction in the past. This has become an increasingly popular sub-genre in recent years, partly due to the success of *The Name of the Rose*. There are, for example, detective stories set in ancient Rome by Lindsey Davis, and many late medieval mysteries featuring an inquisitive monk, written by Ellis Peters. In these cases, even allowing for sincere authorial efforts to establish local and historical colour, the detectives are essentially modern figures transposing anachronistically modern ideas of crime and detection into the past.

non-existence of universals, so it is reasonable to measure William not against some universal figure of the detective, but against influential fictional detectives, reading the rest of the novel through these intertextual figures.

The importance of making such a measurement has been recognised by Michael Cohen, who argues that 'Eco's allusions to particular detectives, detective writers, and stories in *The Name of the Rose* are not merely homage or creative borrowing [but] a *novel* form of literary history'.⁴⁶ However, Cohen limits himself to identifying Voltaire's *Zadig*, Conan Doyle and Borges, each corresponding to a stage in what he labels the 'apocalypse of the detective'.⁴⁷ Although we will be identifying a fuller selection of detectives that can with more justification be labelled a history of the genre, Cohen's apocalyptic pattern is broadly valid. 'Eco's survey of the genre', he writes,

begins with ratiocination considered by the detective's audience as something more than natural, some form of powerful wizardry; it moves to a middle phase in which deduction comes into its own as an accepted method of arriving at truth (though not without opposition from other approaches); and it ends in failure, disillusionment, and epistemological doubt about the empirical results of this way of proceeding as well as about its philosophical basis.⁴⁸

While ultimately there may be reason to call into question the quality of this failure at the end of the novel, the outline is a fair one from which to work. The project is, then, to postulate a sequence of fictional detectives, or detective-like thinkers, whose influence upon the text of *The Name of the Rose*, and, in some sense, presence within it, can be reasonably demonstrated. From the references to Carlo Ginzburg's conjectural paradigm, and William's quotation of Aristotle, we already have an early history of the detective running Aristotle -- Serendippo -- *Zadig* -- Dupin -- Holmes. We may wonder, in fact, if the later fictional detectives add anything not already present, in essence, in the rigorous logical analyses

⁴⁶ Michael Cohen, 'The Hounding of Baskerville: Allusion and Apocalypse in Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', in *Naming the Rose: Essays on Eco's The Name of the Rose*, edited by M. Thomas Inge, pp.65-76, p.65.

⁴⁷ Inge, p.65.

⁴⁸ Inge, p.65.

developed by Aristotle, and which proved such a strong influence on medieval thought through the work of Thomas Aquinas.

Poe's C. Auguste Dupin: Locked Rooms and Foolish Policemen

Of the above list, Poe's Chevalier Dupin is undoubtedly the most significant in establishing the conventions of the detective story. He appeared in only three short stories, 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt', and 'The Purloined Letter'.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Howard Haycraft identifies in these the origins of

the transcendent and eccentric detective; the admiring and slightly stupid foil; the well-intentioned floundering and unimaginativeness of the official guardians of the law; the locked room convention; [...] deduction by putting oneself in another's position [...]; concealment by means of the ultra obvious; the staged ruse to force the culprit's hand; even the expansive and condescending explanation when the chase is done.⁵⁰

We have already observed the use of several of these aspects in *The Name of the Rose*. Given this list, we can locate instances of nearly all of these standard elements in Eco's novel. We have the eccentric detective and admiring foil in William and Adso, not to mention the condescending explanations, as at the conclusion of the Brunellus episode. The unimaginative floundering of the official guardian of the law

⁴⁹ Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', in *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, edited by Thomas Ollive Mabbott, 3 vols. (volumes II and III edited with Eleanor D. Kewer and Maureen C. Mabbott) (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1969 (volume I), 1978 (volumes II and III)), II, 506-18. First published in *Graham's Magazine* (April 1841), 166-79. 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt', in *Collected Works*, III, 723-74. First published in (Snowden's) *Ladies' Companion* for November, December 1842 and February 1843, vol 18, 15-20, 93-9, 162-7. 'The Purloined Letter', in *Collected Works*, III, 974-93. First published in *The Gift*, September 1844, 41-61.

⁵⁰ Haycraft, *Murder for Pleasure*, p.12.

is illustrated in Bernardo Gui's inquisitorial trial.⁵¹ He identifies the former Minorites, Remigio of Varagine and Salvatore, as heretics, and proceeds to place responsibility for all of the deaths onto them. This section of the novel is an argument against the worst behaviour of the Inquisition, in that a preconceived understanding of events is imposed onto accused who are frightened and confused.⁵² Eco's version of the historical Bernardo Gui takes advantage of the doctrinal *naïveté* of the accused to implicate them in everything from witchcraft to murder.⁵³ For our

⁵¹ The novel is conscientious in presenting facts about Gui's life and work, although his attitudes and behaviour in the trial are, of course, speculation. Some indications of his methods may be gleaned from Gui's inquisitorial manual, the *Practica inquisitionis heretice pravitatis*, parts of which are edited and translated by Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans in *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, Records of Civilization: Sources and Studies 81 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), pp.373-445. On Gui's presentation in the novel see also Coletti, pp.99-104.

⁵² The manner in which the aggressive orthodoxy of the Inquisition can manipulate all opposition under the general designation of 'heresy' is the subject of a particularly explicit dialogue between William and Adso on the third day (*The Name of the Rose*, pp.199-208, pp.196-205). This is explored with particular facility in terms of margin and centre by Teresa Coletti in Chapter Three of her book. 'Every battle against heresy', she concludes, 'is an act of semiotic containment of the margin by the center. [Heresy] is not the result of demonic challenges to orthodoxy; heretics are created' (*Naming the Rose*, p.98). Even Adso shares this view:

spesso sono gli inquisitori a creare gli eretici. E non solo nel senso che se li figurano quando non ci sono, ma che reprimono con tanta veemenza la tabe eretica da spingere molti a farsene partecipi, in odio a loro.

often inquisitors create heretics. And not only in the sense that they imagine heretics where these do not exist, but also in the sense that inquisitors repress the heretical putrefaction so vehemently that many are driven to share in it, in their hatred for the judges.

-- *The Name of the Rose*, p.58; p.50. As Coletti notes, this coincides with the thinking of historians such as Carlo Ginzburg, who studied the orthodox reception of an individual 'heretic' from just such a viewpoint in his *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, translated by John and Anne Tedeschi (London: Penguin, 1982).

⁵³ Eco's reading of inquisitorial trials, particularly of the way in which Remigio eventually accepts his fate and starts to respond in the heretical and diabolic discourse expected of him by Bernardo Gui, owes much to modern readings 'against

purposes, however, what is significant is that Bernardo Gui, as much as William, is operating on the basis of abductive guesses. The difference lies in the tentativeness with which William holds his guesses, compared to the easy certainty with which Bernardo Gui finds confirmations of his guess of 'heresy'. As we will explore in greater depth later, Bernardo Gui's approach is essentially paranoid, finding confirmations of his thesis in whatever response is given. William, by contrast, like Holmes before him, describes how he is forced to hold many competing hypotheses in his mind at once, pending evidence that enables him to select one or other of them. 'You must try to imagine many general laws', he tells Adso. '[...] I have to venture many, and many of them are so absurd that I would be ashamed to tell them to you'.⁵⁴

Bernardo Gui's particularly malicious version of the misguided policeman role is but one of the tropes of the detective story in *The Name of the Rose* that can be traced back to Poe. Another is the document concealed in plain sight. This device, famous from 'The Purloined Letter', takes the form of the lost book of Aristotle, pursued through the abbey until William has it sitting on the table of the dead herbalist Severinus.⁵⁵ William, looking for a book in Greek, dismisses it because it starts in Arabic, the book actually being a collection of different manuscripts bound together. After having had the book before them at noon on the fifth day,

the grain' of records of such trials, such as Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms; The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth Century*, translated by John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1983); and *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, translated by Raymond Rosenthal, edited by Gregory Elliott (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1990). On Ginzburg's approach in general, see Keith Luria's 'The Paradoxical Carlo Ginzburg', *Radical History Review* 35 (1986), 80-7. It is also worth recalling here Leonardo Sciascia's attempts to read marginalised beliefs through the incomplete but suggestive documentary evidence of an inquisitorial trial in *Death of an Inquisitor* (see Chapter One).

⁵⁴ 'tu devi provare a immaginare molte leggi generali [...] Ma ne devo fingere molte, e numerose sono quelle così assurde che mi vergognerei di dirtele', *The Name of the Rose*, pp.307-8; p.305. Eco labels this aspect of the process of guessing 'undercoded abduction'. See *The Sign of Three*, pp.206-7.

⁵⁵ It might be anticipated that references to 'The Purloined Letter' would lead the theoretically-aware reader straight to the literary-psychoanalytic discussions collected in *The Purloined Poe*. The novel, however, keeps such an implication marginal, at best, as does *Foucault's Pendulum* with the reference to Michel Foucault in its title.

William and Adso only see the book again, knowing what it is, in the final confrontation in the *finis Africae*.

The business with the book is also a form of 'locked room' device. This convention of the detective story, in which a corpse is found in a locked room, provides a mystery as apparently impenetrable as the room itself. The trope gets a more substantial airing in the initial death which William is asked to investigate. The corpse of Adelmo of Otranto has been found beneath the north face of the Aedificium, and William immediately sees from the fact that the body has been buried in consecrated ground that the abbot has ruled out suicide as a possible explanation, leading to the conclusion that 'an evil force, whether natural or supernatural, is at work in the abbey'.⁵⁶ The puzzlement comes from the fact that the Aedificium appears to be a kind of 'locked room', with nobody permitted access at night, when the death occurred, and no indication of how Adelmo fell. William solves the mystery by showing how Adelmo leapt from another point of the wall, and the body was carried below the east tower by a small landslide caused by the storm on the night of his death.

It is easy to forget that the Dupin stories exhibit characteristics that we might assume come later, in an ironic or self-conscious genre. The slyest piece of mind-reading, both on the part of Dupin and of Poe as a creative writer, is the detail of the different witnesses hearing different languages from within the room. The noises are, in fact, the jabbering of the real culprit, an Orang-Outan. Each witness interprets the non-linguistic sounds as linguistic -- but simply beyond their competence, attributing it 'not to the voice of an individual of any nation with whose language he is conversant -- but the converse'.⁵⁷ *The Name of the Rose* echoes this in a moment aside from the main business of detection. When Jorge is giving his sermon, he gives a vivid and fearsome portrait of the Antichrist. William whispers to Adso that it sounds like a description of Jorge himself, causing Adso to utter a version of the non-linguistic sound that is at issue through the novel:

⁵⁶ 'una forza malefica, naturale o soprannaturale che sia, si aggira ora per l'abbazia', *The Name of the Rose*, p.41; p.33.

⁵⁷ *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, II, p.549.

Tratenni a stento una risata, gonfiando le gote e lasciando uscire un soffio dalle labbra chiuse. Rumore che, nel silenzio che era seguito alle ultime parole del vecchio, si udì benissimo, ma per fortuna tutti pensarono che fosse qualcuno che tossiva o che piangeva, o rabbriviva, e tutti ne avevano ben donde.

I restrained myself from laughing with difficulty, swelling my cheeks and letting a puff escape through my closed lips. A sound that, in the silence which had followed the old man's last word, could be easily heard, but luckily everyone thought that it was someone coughing, or crying, or shuddering, and all of them were right.⁵⁸

As in 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' the non-linguistic noise is inevitably understood by those that hear it as a sign of some type, according to their knowledge and their expectations. On a deeper level, this forms part of the novel's discourse on the nature of laughter. Jorge's desire to keep the second book of Aristotle's *Poetics* from inquisitive eyes derives from his fear that laughter, and hence the ridicule of authority, may be seen as proper to humanity rather than animalistic. There is further reference to the Orang-Outan's 'language' in the babbling speech of Salvatore, 'that monk who looks like an animal and speaks the language of Babel'.⁵⁹ Poe's non-language that appears to be all languages is reworked by Eco so that it answers his own concerns on linguistic referentiality. Adso, once he has heard of Salvatore's peregrinations through Europe, realises that 'Salvatore spoke all languages, and no language'.⁶⁰

The other major ploy in 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' is the setting up of an apparent paradox. No man can be imagined capable of the murders, therefore the police are at a loss. Dupin shows that the resolution lies in exposing the assumption that the murders must be committed by a human. If they were committed by an Orang-Outan, the puzzles over the motivation for the murders and their brutality are shown to be misplaced. Of course, this is something that we can recognise in *The Name of the Rose*, where one of the great stumbling blocks is imagining a single human agent

⁵⁸ *The Name of the Rose*, p.406; p.402, my translation.

⁵⁹ 'quel monaco che sembra un animale e parla la lingua di Babele', *The Name of the Rose*, p.71; p.64.

⁶⁰ 'Salvatore parlava tutte le lingue, e nessuna', *The Name of the Rose*, p.54; p.46.

capable of and motivated to committing the various murders. The historically appropriate solutions in *The Name of the Rose* involve invoking a supernatural force - either the Devil at large in the abbey, or God enacting his foretold pattern of the apocalypse. As we will see, however, this 'anti-detective' trope, where the detective is deceived by a false design, is not only present in the detective story at its origins, but is recapitulated with increasing force through the history of the genre.

G.K. Chesterton's Father Brown: God as Guarantor

The comparisons between William and Sherlock Holmes to be found throughout *The Name of the Rose* are largely due to the cultural familiarity of the latter. Conan Doyle's success with Holmes owes more to the skill with which characters are strongly delineated than the rather minor differences of method there are between Holmes and Dupin. Aside from Professor Moriarty's underworld conspiracy (which will prove to be more relevant to *Foucault's Pendulum*), Conan Doyle's stories consolidate rather than expand the tropology of the genre. As obvious as the references to Sherlock Holmes are in *The Name of the Rose*, the very idea of a priest-detective should make the reader instantly think of G.K. Chesterton's rather more subtle detective character, Father Brown. Chesterton's series featuring the Catholic priest who dabbles with being a detective, consisting of five volumes of short stories, was published between 1910 and 1935, overlapping the end of Holmes' career.⁶¹ Chesterton, a prolific apologist for Christianity in the context of the

⁶¹ Collected in *The Penguin Complete Father Brown* (London: Penguin, 1981). One of the most concise accounts of the location of Father Brown in the detective tradition comes from Antonio Gramsci's *Lettere dal carcere*. In a letter of October 6th 1930 he mocks his correspondent for failing to understand what Chesterton is doing. 'You were not even aware', he writes,

that Chesterton had written an extremely subtle caricature of detective stories rather than straight detective stories. Father Brown is a Catholic who mocks the mechanical habits of thought of Protestants, and the book is basically a defence of the Roman Church against the Anglican Church. Sherlock Holmes is the Protestant detective who unravels the tangled skein of a crime starting from the outside, using scientific and experimental methods and induction. Father Brown is the Catholic priest who uses the subtle psychological experience

modern world, was deeply aware of the paradoxical elements of his theological position. Although the Father Brown stories had been going for twelve years before Chesterton finally converted to Catholicism in 1922, the priest-detective had, from the beginning, exemplified what Chesterton took to be the truth about religious experience. That is to say, although there was not, and would never be, any concrete proof for the existence of God, faith in God was the step one must take in order to perceive the world as it really is. As early as 1908, with the publication of *The Man who was Thursday*, Chesterton used the detective or mystery format to work through this problem.⁶² The novel begins as an investigation of an anarchist plot, but gradually inverts itself through an increasingly surrealistic and allegorical narrative, so that in the end the man being pursued is God. It elegantly represents Chesterton's contention that the paranoid, the occult and the conspiratorial are nothing more than a substitute for God. This thought reached its pristine expression in the story 'The Oracle of the Dog', where Father Brown concludes that

it's the first effect of not believing in God that you lose your common sense and can't see things as they are. Anything that anybody talks about, and says there's a good deal in it, extends itself indefinitely like a vista in a nightmare.⁶³

Chesterton's theology is illustrated nowhere more carefully and subtly than in the character of Father Brown, and nowhere more than in the volume containing this story, *The Incredulity of Father Brown*. All of these cases involve ancient curses,

gained from the confessional and from the vigorous moral casuistry of the Fathers, depending particularly on deduction and introspection while not totally ignoring the science and experiment.

-- Antonio Gramsci, *Letters from Prison: Lettere dal Carcere*, translated by H. Henderson (London: Pluto, 1988), letter dated October 6th 1930. Gramsci's analysis, while suggestive, overlooks Conan Doyle's education in a Jesuit school. This background may help to explain certain Thomist characteristics in the character of Sherlock Holmes.

⁶² G.K. Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1908).

⁶³ G.K. Chesterton, 'The Oracle of the Dog', in *The Penguin Complete Father Brown*, pp.352-68, p.368.

ghosts, miracles and other mystical devices. Jorge Luis Borges expresses well the basic form of the stories, while at the same time exaggerating the uniformity of the stories, when he declares that 'each story in the Father Brown Saga presents a mystery, proposes explanations of a demoniacal or magical sort, and then replaces them at the end with solutions of this world'.⁶⁴ The constant factor is the manner in which Father Brown is shown to be more sceptical of such superstitions than those who proclaim themselves rationalists, sceptics or humanists. He explains himself best in 'The Dagger with Wings', where a murderer, impersonating the man he has already killed, spins Father Brown an impromptu tale of spirits and winged vampires. The murderer, calling himself Aylmer, challenges Father Brown's incredulity:

"Besides, you have no business to be an unbeliever. You ought to stand for all the things these stupid people call superstitions. Come now, don't you think there's a lot in those old wives' tales about luck and charms and so on, silver bullets included? What do you say about them as a Catholic?"

"I say I'm an agnostic," replied Father Brown, smiling.

"Nonsense," said Aylmer impatiently. "It's your business to believe things."

"Well, I do believe some things, of course," conceded Father Brown, "and therefore, of course, I don't believe other things."⁶⁵

This resolute distinction between different types of occurrence that are casually grouped together as superstitions is, of course, at the heart of *The Name of the Rose*. The question that persists to the end of the novel, and arguably beyond, is whether the murders in the abbey are attributable to a supernatural agency, and if they are, whether it is the work of the devil, an apocalyptic plan of God, or some other form of conjured order. The answer, to Father Brown, would have been clear. 'What we all dread most', he proclaimed in one story, 'is a maze with *no* centre. That is why

⁶⁴ 'Cada una de las piezas de la Saga di Padre Brown presenta un misterio, propone explicaciones de tipo demoníaco o mágico y las reemplaza, al fin, con otras que son de este mundo', Jorge Luis Borges, 'Sobra Chesterton', in *Obras Completas 1923-1972*, pp.694-6, p.694.

⁶⁵ G.K. Chesterton, 'The Dagger with Wings', in *The Penguin Complete Father Brown*, pp.407-424, p.418.

atheism is only a nightmare'.⁶⁶ A maze without a centre is, however, just the imaginative space in which William finds himself increasingly forced to operate.

His most notable and unequivocal success comes in unravelling the mysteries of the library, a more traditional type of maze. Although it has no centre in a trivial sense, it is centred -- given meaning -- by the fact that it was designed by human agency to fulfil a purpose. The pattern of its rooms spells out, by means of quotations from the book of Revelation, the areas of the known world to which the books within pertain or belong. This means that, as Adso eventually realises, 'the plan of the library reproduces the map of the world'.⁶⁷ This cartographical aspect can be discovered, however, only once the ground plan of the library has been ascertained. After becoming thoroughly lost on his first venture into the library, William solves this puzzle by recourse to another powerful mental tool for determining design. 'We must find from the outside', he says, 'a way of describing the Aedificium as it is inside'.⁶⁸ Mathematics is the way, allowing William to calculate the interior plan of the library from its external geometry. Even at his moment of triumph, however, William is careful to delimit the utility of his methods. He is able to understand, he says, 'the creations of art, because we retrace in our minds the operations of the artificer. Not the creations of nature, because they are not the work of our minds'.⁶⁹

This distinction reasserts William's links with the 'mind-reading' claims of fictional detectives (including those of Father Brown, whose experience of the confessional gives him insight into the minds of, at the least, Catholic criminals). At the same time, however, it suggests that reality is exactly the sort of uncentred maze to which Father Brown objected. Eco makes this explicit by reference to Deleuze and

⁶⁶ G.K. Chesterton, 'The Head of Caesar', in *The Penguin Complete Father Brown*, pp.232-44, p.235.

⁶⁷ 'il tracciato della biblioteca riproduce la mappa dell'universo mondo', *The Name of the Rose*, p.316; p.314.

⁶⁸ 'dobbiamo trovare da fuori un modo di descrivere l'Edificio come è da dentro', *The Name of the Rose*, p.218; p.215.

⁶⁹ 'Le cose dell'arte, perché ripercorriamo nella nostra mente le operazione dell'artefice. Non le cose della natura, perché non sono opera della nostra mente', *The Name of the Rose*, p.222; p.218.

Guattari's concept of the rhizome in *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*.⁷⁰ 'The labyrinth of my library is still a mannerist labyrinth', he writes, 'but the world in which William realizes he is living already has a rhizome structure: that is, it can be structured but is never structured definitively'.⁷¹

In some respects, then, Father Brown represents a median position in the contrast Eco sets up between a transcendent authorizing structure, and cautiously promoted local structures of meaning. Of course, Brown's faith in God, the grand narrative that determines his view of the rest of the world, is the Ecovian Absent Structure *par excellence*, in terms of its historical and cultural significance. At the same time, however, there is a potentially catastrophic awareness of the precariousness of faith. Brown's faith will ultimately explain everything -- except the faith itself. The theological crisis that may rise out of this is, at best, implicit in the Father Brown stories. After all, Chesterton was interested in working back from a position of humanistic scepticism to an acceptance of faith, so already assumes in the reader an awareness that faith is essentially groundless. William of Baskerville, despite his anachronisms, is a monk of the fourteenth century, and is travelling forwards toward this same theological crisis. Adso, in his first description of William, registers the imminence of this crisis even as he professes not to understand him, beyond the fact that he is motivated 'solely by the desire for truth, and by the suspicion -- which I could see he always harboured -- that the truth was not what was appearing to him at any given moment.'⁷²

On one level, this is a semiotic paranoia equally at home in a modern world of arbitrary signification and a medieval cosmology where signs are but pale shadows of the divine. However, this hint also helps to bracket the movement of faith in *The Name of the Rose*. William, always ironically detached from the more forthright

⁷⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Rhizome* (Paris: Minuit, 1976). Eco's discussion in *Reflections on The Name of the Rose* is developed from his use of the metaphor of the labyrinth to describe encyclopedic competence. See Umberto Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (London: Macmillan, 1984), section 2.3.5, pp.80-4.

⁷¹ *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, p.57-8.

⁷² 'mosso com'era dall'unico desiderio della verità, e dal sospetto -- che sempre gli vidi nutrire -- che la verità non fosse quella che gli appariva nel momento presente', *The Name of the Rose*, p.22; p.14.

professors of faith around him, is non-committal on the question of his personal faith to a degree that keeps open the possibility that he has no faith at all, or at best an uncertain faith. Difficult concepts such as 'truth' can be expected to exhibit a certain amount of instability within the course of a novel, especially a novel that makes intertextual references to many different thinkers who mention the subject.⁷³ Allowing for this *caveat*, there is an identifiable shift in the meaning of the term through the book. Halfway through the novel we find Adso thinking of William's relationship to truth in a way that is indicative of this shift. Adso despairs of his master, identifying himself with William's antagonist, as he 'was on the side of that thirst for truth that inspired Bernard Gui.'⁷⁴ Adso can no longer (or not yet, given that the comment earlier in the narrative is actually made in Adso's dotage) see the point of William's reserve of judgement. 'I had', he says,

the impression that William was not at all interested in the truth, which is nothing but the adjustment between the thing and the intellect. On the contrary, he amused himself by imagining how many possibilities were possible.⁷⁵

This formulation is enormously important as it encompasses the principle that Michael Holquist, in one of the most important essays on twentieth century detective fiction, identifies as the hallmark of the classical detective:

The detective, the instrument of pure logic, [is] able to triumph because he alone in a world of credulous men, holds to the Scholastic principle of *adequatio rei et intellectus*, the adequation of mind to things, the belief that the mind, given enough time, can understand everything.⁷⁶

⁷³ Compare, for example, Eco's discussion of the problems associated with the idea of 'haste' in *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, pp.4-7.

⁷⁴ 'Parteggiai per le sete di verità che animava Bernardo Gui', *The Name of the Rose*, p.309; p.306.

⁷⁵ 'Ebbi l'impressione che Guglielmo non fosse affatto interessato alla verità, che altro non è che l'adeguazione tra la cosa e l'intelletto. Egli invece si divertiva a immaginare quanti più possibili fosse possibile', *The Name of the Rose*, p.309; p.306.

⁷⁶ Holquist, p.141.

Adso's doubt in his master is due to the fact that William, unlike Bernardo Gui, questions the unproblematic operation of this principle. The whole novel can be seen as being to some extent the history of Adso's gradual education in the reasons for William's reservation on this matter. As he is the narrator, Adso's education brings along with it the awareness for the Model Reader that William's stance does after all differ in some respects from the Golden Age detective. The other bracket in this respect is the final dialogue with Adso, as they watch the fire engulf what remains of the abbey. William, having realised the falsity of the hypothesis that led him to discover the truth about the deaths in the abbey, chastises himself. 'Where is all my wisdom, then?', he says. 'I behaved stubbornly, pursuing a semblance of order, when I should have known well that there is no order in the universe'.⁷⁷ He continues the thought a little later:

È difficile accettare l'idea che non vi può essere un ordine nell'universo, perché offenderebbe la libera volontà di Dio e la sua onnipotenza. Così la libertà di Dio è la nostra condanna, o almeno la condanna della nostra superbia.

It's hard to accept the idea that there cannot be an order in the universe because it would offend the free will of God and His omnipotence. So the freedom of God is our condemnation, or at least the condemnation of our pride.⁷⁸

Of course, such a conclusion is the very opposite of Father Brown's belief. However, if *The Name of the Rose*'s crisis in transcendental authorization is distant from Chesterton's theological position, William of Baskerville still owes a great deal to Father Brown's character as essentially modest, self-doubting and self-critical. Father Brown set the template for a series of well-known fictional detectives whose superior mental capabilities were emphasised by their unassuming, disadvantaged or eccentric public images. In this class we may consider Rex Stout's housebound Nero Wolfe, Dorothy Sayers' effete Lord Peter Wimsey, or, on television, the tramp-like Columbo. The doyenne of this type was, though, the enormously successful Agatha

⁷⁷ 'Dove sta tutta la mia saggezza? Mi sono comportato da ostinato, inseguendo una parvenza di ordine, quando dovevo sapere bene che non vi è un ordine nell'universo', *The Name of the Rose*, p.495; p.492.

⁷⁸ *The Name of the Rose*, p.495; p.492-3.

Christie, whose preposterous Poirot and matronly Miss Marple featured in dozens of bestsellers.

Agatha Christie: The Least Likely Suspect

The epitome of detective fiction as a consolatory exercise, Christie is considered ultra-traditional to the point of risibility. Certainly her writing style was basic, her characterisation crude, and her portraits of English village life curiously trapped between chocolate-box idealism and the high murder rates necessitated by the genre. What gave Christie her success, however, was her realisation that the Golden Age detective story presented a theme, a strong formula upon which the reader wanted formal variations. She conscientiously explored the terms of the detective novel within its immutable overall structure. For instance, *Murder on the Orient Express* asks the reader to choose between an exaggeratedly limited cast of suspects, all with good motive, then reveals that they all did it, acting in concert.

Similarly, *Death on the Nile* exemplified the formal principle of the murderer being the least likely suspect. In this case one of the characters is made bed-bound after being shot in the kneecap. It is finally revealed that the shooting was faked, as a ploy to rule out the culprit as a suspect for the subsequent murder. On one hand, both of these stories illustrate the kind of paranoid response encouraged by Golden Age detective fiction. No incident or character is above suspicion, particularly those that appear overtly innocent. Nothing is as it seems. Anything and everything may have been plotted by the criminal. We can, therefore, understand the Golden Age detective story as essentially paranoid, in that it semiotically arouses the reader to treat every detail, every action, description or absence of description as meaningful. Not only can the smallest detail turn out to be the centre of the mystery, but also any element is always potentially deceptive. The Model Reader of classic detective fiction is infinitely suspicious, encouraged always to reject the obvious in preference to the least likely solution.

On the other hand, there is a strong contract developed between the text and the reader that asks the latter to disregard preposterousness of the solution in order to be rewarded with the *frisson* afforded by a marginal expansion of the formal constraints

of the genre. The principle of 'least likely suspect' is a strange one, formally difficult as well as forcing the story away from an identification with the real. Its operation depends on the reader not identifying the suspect through this principle whilst reading, but then accepting the story as a good, competent form of the genre when the principle is shown to be operative. In other words, the reader is asked for a double response to the text. The first is as a naïve reader, who accepts the text as representing a world, and in which the solution is thus so improbable as to be unforeseeable. The second is as a generically astute reader who can recognise that the text is nothing more than a formal manipulation of certain very precise generic rules, and which, ideally, manipulates these rules to produce an unexpected solution without breaking them.⁷⁹ This process of gesturing toward formal rupture without actually performing it is, indeed, one way of reading *The Name of the Rose*. Eco's detective story ends with the identification of the criminal. However, as we will see, the detective's account of the crimes -- one of the most important elements of the Golden Age detective story -- is seriously faulty and requires the correction of the culprit himself. We will explore some of the consequences of this later, but it must always be borne in mind that, to a degree, this can be understood as nothing more than an acceptable manipulation of the formal bounds of the genre. As Eco notes with gleeful provocation at the end of his *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, 'the Oulipo group has recently constructed a matrix of all possible murder-story situations and has found that there is still to be written a book in which the murderer is the reader'.⁸⁰

Of all Christie's many detective novels, *The ABC Murders* stands out as presenting a manipulation of the detective genre that is both particularly artful and prefigurative of *The Name of the Rose*.⁸¹ The novel presents a mystery where the

⁷⁹ This rule-boundedness of the Golden Age detective story was made literal by several writers and organisations. See Howard Haycraft's anthology *The Art of the Mystery Story: A Collection of Critical Essays* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), which collects several such lists of rules.

⁸⁰ *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, p.78.

⁸¹ Agatha Christie, *The ABC Murders*, (London: Collins, 1936), edition cited (London: HarperCollins, 1996).

murders appear to be committed according to an superimposed, alphabetical pattern.⁸² The first victim, one Alice Ascher of Andover, is killed in an apparently motiveless attack, for which the only clue is a copy of the ABC railway timetable left at the scene. The pattern continues for the letters B, C and D, before Poirot identifies the murderer. He concludes that the death of Sir Carmichael Clarke of Churton was the murderer's true target, with the others being killed in order to convince investigators that the death was part of a pattern imposed by a madman. Such a simple device would be uninteresting were it not for the fact that, unusually, the narrative is interspersed with the narrative of a man who thinks that he is the murderer. This is a decoy even more for the reader than for the detective, assuring that the perceived pattern must be correct through the mutual belief of the investigators and the (supposed) murderer. As such, *The ABC Murders* stands as an orthodox detective story informing the pattern expressed in *The Name of the Rose*. For the deaths in Eco's novel are increasingly perceived through the course of the action to be happening in accordance with the Revelation of St. John. William, always suspecting a human agency where others are tempted to look for the supernatural or divine, understands it to be a sequence somehow directed by the man protecting the book of Aristotle. This hypothesis, as in *The ABC Murders*, turns out to be largely false. However, whereas the Christie novel falls back to an even more paranoid solution to explain its false design, *The Name of the Rose* explodes the design, showing it to be no more than a random accretion of circumstances, into which design has been read by those who assume that the world is inherently ordered. As William admits to Jorge, as he faces him in the *finis Africae*:

mi ero convinto che la serie dei delitti seguisse il ritmo delle sette trombe dell'Apocalisse. La grandine per Adelmo, ed era un suicidio. Il sangue per Venanzio, ed era stata una idea bizzarra di Berengario; l'acqua per Berengario stesso, ed era stato un fatto casuale; la terza

⁸² Both David H. Richter and Peter Bondanella observe the relevance of *The ABC Murders* to the novel, although Bondanella, for one, seems unaware of the final twists of the novel. Richter also mentions S.S. Van Dine's *The Benson Murder Case*, where the murders follow nursery rhymes, and Ellery Queen's *The Ten Days Wonder*, where the crimes are based on the Ten Commandments. He observes that the pattern in such novels is typically a blind for the real underlying pattern, as it is in *The ABC Murders*. See Richter, in *Reading Eco*, p.273 and Bondanella, p.117.

parte del cielo per Severino, e Malachia aveva colpito con la sfera armillare perché era l'unica cosa che si era trovato sottomano.

I was convinced the series of crimes followed the sequence of the seven trumpets of the Apocalypse. Hail for Adelmo, and his death was a suicide. Blood for Venantius, and there it had been a bizarre notion of Berengar's; water for Berengar himself, and it had been a random act; the third part of the sky for Severinus, and Malachi had struck him with the armillary sphere because it was the only thing he found handy.⁴³

In this way, Eco's novel plays out the death of the classical detective structure. The overturning of the paranoid order of the Golden Age detective story, its inversion or self-destruction, is the legacy of that strongest of influences on Eco's fiction, Jorge Luis Borges.

Jorge Luis Borges: The Death of the Detective

In 1983 Eco contributed a postscript, 'Abduction in Uqbar', to a German edition of *Six Problems for Don Isidro Parodi*, by Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares.⁴⁴ Here, alongside the usual explication of Peirce's abduction as a good model of the interpretive techniques of Golden Age detectives, Eco explores the status of this curious collection of detective stories. Crimes are solved by Don Parodi as he sits in his jail cell, purely through listening to an account of the crime delivered by one of the participants. The stories are, of course, parodies of the detective stories that Borges loved and knew so well, trumping the likes of Nero Wolfe by having the Don unable to even visit the scene of the crime by proxy, relying utterly on the chattering, meandering accounts of ridiculous Buenos Aires

⁴³ *The Name of the Rose*, p.473; p.469-70.

⁴⁴ First published in German as 'Die Abduktion in Uqbar', in Honorio Bustos Domecq [Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares], *Secht Aufgaben für Don Isidro Parodi* (Munich: Hanser, 1983). The Italian version of the essay is in *Sugli specchi e altri saggi*, and is translated into English by Juliann Vitullo and Guy Raffa as 'Abduction in Uqbar', Chapter Ten in *The Limits of Interpretation*, pp.152-62. The stories themselves are available in English, without Eco's essay, as *Six Problems for Don Isidro Parodi*, by Honorio Bustos Domecq (London: Allen Lane, 1981).

locals. Eco is interested in the manner in which the stories fail to summon up correctly the two Model Readers expected of the classic detective story. Whereas the reader of a Golden Age detective fiction is expected to reread it mentally at its close, acknowledging the cleverness and correctness of the detective's conclusions, the reader of these stories is left baffled. This is not, warns Eco, because they are nonsensical, but because 'when we reread Don Isidro's stories we are left wondering: "Why should I have taken note of that detail instead of others?"'.⁸⁵

Eco's answer is that these stories parody the classic detective model by extension of the paranoid principle by which it operates. 'The mechanism of the Don Isidro stories anticipates', for Eco, 'the fundamental mechanism of many of Borges's later stories, perhaps all of them [...] *the mechanism of conjecture in a sick Spinozist universe*'.⁸⁶ What he means by this is that Don Isidro Parodi pushes to extremes the fictional detective's uncanny ability not only to make the right conjecture, but to be sure that it is the right conjecture. Like Charles Peirce, the detective believes that his guesses are supported by a basic structural similarity between his thoughts and the patterns of the world. As Eco points out, he 'must believe a profound Spinozist notion that "ordo et connexio rerum idem est ac ordo et connexio idearum"'.⁸⁷ It is this belief, as a governing principle of the Golden Age detective story, that Borges and Bioy Casares parody. It is this belief that Borges challenges in some of his most famous and influential fictions.

Several of these fictions have been cited as relevant to the construction of *The Name of the Rose*.⁸⁸ Critics have been encouraged in this by the obvious similarity

⁸⁵ *The Limits of Interpretation*, p.155.

⁸⁶ *The Limits of Interpretation*, p.156.

⁸⁷ *The Limits of Interpretation*, p.160. The quotation is from Benedictus de [Baruch] Spinoza, 'Ethica ordine geometrico demonstrata', in *Opera*, edited by C. Gebhardt, 4 vols. Auftrag der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften (Heidelberg: Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1924), II, p.7.

⁸⁸ On the presence of both Borges and his stories in the novel, see Leo Corry, 'Jorge Borges, Author of *The Name of the Rose*', *Poetics Today* 13 (1992), 425-45; April Kenziora Smith, 'The "Other" in Borges, Borges in Others', *Perspectives on Contemporary Literature* 12 (1986), 104-12; Christine de Lailhacar, 'The Mirror and the Encyclopedia: Borgesian Codes in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', in *Borges and His Successors: The Borgesian Impact on Literature and the Arts*, edited by Edna Aizenberg (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990), pp.155-79;

in name and appearance between Jorge Luis Borges and Jorge of Burgos. Jorge as blind master of the mazelike and apparently comprehensive library has similarly inspired comparisons with Borges' story 'The Library of Babel'.⁸⁹ The infinitely replicated hexagonal galleries of books in this story are a clear influence on the structure of the remarkably large library in *The Name of the Rose*. At the same time, the very fact of their endless similitude allows Borges to employ one of his favourite formulations to describe the library as '*a sphere whose exact centre is any one of its hexagons and whose circumference is inaccessible*'.⁹⁰ We have already seen this idea employed by Calvino to symbolize the structure of post-structuralist meaning, and we will have cause to return to it again.

Of more relevance to the narrative structure of *The Name of the Rose* is one of Borges' few genuine detective stories, 'Death and the Compass'.⁹¹ This recounts the final case of one Erik Lönnrot, a detective who 'believed himself a pure reasoner, an Auguste Dupin', but in whom there was 'a little of the gambler'.⁹² In other words, Lönnrot is a classic abductive detective, gambling on the accuracy of his guesses, gambling that his world is a sick Spinozist one. When a scholar of the cabbala is murdered in a hotel room, Lönnrot guesses that the solution is linked to cabbalistic thought. He is wrong, but his enemy, Red Scharlach, takes the opportunity to turn this hypothesis into a pattern of deaths that mimic the Tetragrammaton, YHWH, set at the four points of the compass around the city. The pattern is a false one: its only purpose is to lure Lönnrot to the location where he believes the fourth murder will take place. The invocation of the name of God, and the apparent meaning of the other deaths, are both false, designed to appeal to the pattern which the detective has already conceived. The order of the world matches

Deborah Parker, 'The Literature of Appropriation: Eco's Use of Borges in *Il nome della rosa*', *Modern Literature Review* 85 (1990), 842-9; and Leticia Reyes-Tatinclaux, 'The Face of Evil: Devilish Borges in Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', *Chasqui: Revista de Literatura Latinoamericana* 18 (1989), 3-9.

⁸⁹ Jorge Luis Borges, 'The Library of Babel', in *Labyrinths*, pp.78-86.

⁹⁰ *Labyrinths*, p.79.

⁹¹ Jorge Luis Borges, 'Death and the Compass', in *Labyrinths*, pp.106-117.

⁹² *Labyrinths*, p.106.

the order imagined by the detective only because it has been designed to follow that order, as a means to draw Lönnrot, vainly supposing that he has solved the puzzle, to his death. The principle of *adequatio rei et intellectus*, identified by Michael Holquist as the governing rule of the detective story, is not operative, or if it is, only in a perverse and malicious way. This is because Lönnrot's death also completes the pattern, leading to a resolution of resigned melancholy and stillness typical of Borges.

It is easy to see how *The Name of the Rose* essentially borrows this pattern. As in 'Death and the Compass', William finally realises that he 'conceived a false pattern to interpret the moves of a guilty man, and the guilty man fell in with it'.⁹³ Just as Borges' story relies on the fulfilment of a false plot, so William of Baskerville is baffled by a plot that followed the outlines that he imagined for it, but without the meaning he ascribed to it. As he concludes in what Adso recognises an ambiguously self-contradictory statement: 'There was no plot [...] and I discovered it by mistake'.⁹⁴ William's unhappy discovery that he, too, desired to place an essentially paranoid framework of meaning on events is only tempered by the suitably ironic manner in which he realises the status of this liminal pattern must be expressed. It is to this conjunction of the paranoid and the ironic that we must turn next.

Paranoia and Irony

There is great deal of paranoia, used in a casual sense, in *The Name of the Rose*. There is little trust, suspicions and accusations are whispered in the cloisters and the gardens, and there is no shortage of suspects to be held responsible for the deaths. There is, however, a more formally interesting form of paranoia present in the suspicions of most of those in the abbey that there is a single agent -- divine, supernatural, human or some combination of these -- responsible for all the disasters

⁹³ 'Ho fabbricato uno schema falso per interpretare le mosse del colpevole e il colpevole vi si è adeguato', *The Name of the Rose*, p.473; p.470.

⁹⁴ 'Non v'era un trama [...] e io l'ho scoperto per sbaglio', *The Name of the Rose*, p.494; p.491.

befalling the abbey. In this sense, they are expressing from the start a paranoid reading of the world that is expressed as the final point of the Golden Age detective story. The typical detective narrative reduces a scene of apparent disorder to an efficient explanation that demonstrates a deep, and malicious, order. The order imagined by the detective is the same as that constructed by the criminal, and both of these correspond minutely to the real order of the world. *The Name of the Rose* develops a more sophisticated and critical view of this paranoid expectation, largely through the application of irony to undermine such a monolithic interpretive structure.

Paranoia is usually understood in something approaching its clinical meaning of a delusional state, typically of persecution. The everyday meaning of paranoia thus implies excessive suspicion, and incorporates ideas that one is being conspired against, being looked at, or being talked about by others. Although this common usage is usually construed as being the subject of malevolent interest by others, there is no reason why this should necessarily be the case. Clinical paranoia can also consist in delusions of importance, or that one has secret powers to influence others. The key notion is that the paranoid individual feels itself to be special, the focus of attention of others, or even the focus of the world itself. The paranoid subject feels itself to be the intended subject of the actions or even the lives of others. Commensurate with this is the observation by the paranoid subject that, given that they are the centre of the universe, everything they perceive is potentially meaningful in terms of the conspiracy against them. In this respect, the paradigmatic paranoia is that of the individual who understands a public act of communication -- an advertisement, the lyrics of a song, or the conversation of a television presenter -- as though it contained a coded or private message aimed precisely at that individual. In this respect, paranoia is characterised by a misapprehension of significance. As Jean-Jacques Lecercle wrote, 'for the paranoiac everything is a sign, and signs take on a new importance and urgency'.⁹⁵ Paranoia is an interpretive error; not a complete misreading, but a failure to select the most probable, the most communally acceptable meaning in the act of interpreting an utterance.

⁹⁵ Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Philosophy through the Looking Glass: Language, Nonsense, Desire* (London: Hutchinson, 1985), p.130.

Although the clinical definition of paranoia is itself of some use in understanding the behaviour of individual characters in Eco's fiction, I will use the term more generally to describe a world-view that resonates deeply through the novels. This is a world-view identifiable from its frequent contemporary appearances in the 'paranoid fiction' of quintessentially postmodernist writers such as Jorge Luis Borges, Italo Calvino, Vladimir Nabokov, Paul Auster and Thomas Pynchon. There, as in Eco's fiction, paranoia refers simultaneously to the clinical state of mind of some characters and to the recognisably postmodernist trope, often projected through the narration itself rather than a character, that meaning resides everywhere (as in the fearful sphere described by Borges). It is, then, this double ubiquity of centre and of meaning that I am indicating through the term 'paranoid'.

In Pynchon's novels, most clearly of all, paranoia is a form of response to *horror vacui*: the unsettling central claim of post-structuralism that there is no guarantee of meaning, nor can there ever be. The removal of any ultimate authority for the text that is implied by such key post-structuralist arguments as Roland Barthes' 'The Death of the Author' can often seem to leave the reader, the interpreter, as the only available determinant of meaning.⁹⁶ Certainly, Eco's contributions to interpretation theory have reflected this viewpoint. In his essay '*Intentio Lectoris*: The State of the Art', he offers a historical account of interpretation theory that bears a strong relationship to the post-structuralist affinity with paranoia.⁹⁷

Eco's schematic account, necessarily and acknowledgedly a simplification both historically and philosophically, begins with the principle of *intentio auctoris*, that is to say, the primeval or naïve theory of interpretation that meaning resides with the author's intention. This position is superseded by *intentio lectoris* -- the extreme post-structuralist position that meaning is determined solely by the reader. It is this, argues Eco, that brings with it the danger of paranoid interpretation. If all texts can be treated quite seriously as though they were private communications to the individual reader then the interpreter truly is at the centre of the world -- at least, the fictive world offered by the text. While interpretive paranoia within the realm of

⁹⁶ Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image-Music-Text*, translated by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977).

⁹⁷ Umberto Eco, '*Intentio Lectoris*: The State of the Art', Chapter Three in *The Limits of Interpretation*, pp.44-63.

texts may appear relatively benign, semiotically this result applies equally to all interpretive activity. The spectre haunting the post-structuralist world (a ghostly and elusive presence despite the frequently made assumption that this is the position adopted by Derrida) is that of absolute relativism in interpretation, the idea of a value-free world where 'anything goes'.

Reading Eco's recent works on interpretation, it is clear that he feels responsible in some measure for this situation, especially with the concept of the 'open work' he introduced in 1962's *Opera aperta*.⁹⁸ In that book, 'even though stressing the role of the interpreter ready to risk an ideal insomnia in order to pursue infinite interpretations', he claimed in 1990, 'I was insisting that to interpret a text means to interpret *that* text, not one's own personal drives'.⁹⁹ The practical limit imposed by the public linguistic forms and references of the text, which Eco labels *intentio operis*, represents the attempted solution to the problem of infinite and free interpretability.

The paranoid interpretive tendency is, however, only a part of the contemporary situation. Post-structuralist thought and postmodernist fiction are both predominantly associated with scepticism, with the drive to destabilise grand narratives or structures of meaning, and with a cautious reservation about being seen to defend a particular

⁹⁸ Eco in fact came very close to ceding absolute interpretive freedom as a necessary corollary of the idea of the open work, as can be seen by his own summary of his argument:

We have, therefore, seen that (1) "open" works, insofar as they are *in movement*, are characterized by the invitation to *make the work* together with the author and that (2) on a wider level (as a subgenus in the species "work in movement") there exist works which, though organically completed, are "open" to a continuous generation of internal relations which the addressee must uncover and select in his act of perceiving the totality of incoming stimuli. (3) *Every* work of art, even though it is produced by following an explicit or implicit poetics of necessity, is effectively open to a virtually unlimited range of possible readings, each of which causes the work to acquire new vitality in terms of one particular taste, or perspective, or personal *performance*.

-- Umberto Eco, 'The Poetics of the Open Work', in *The Open Work*, p.21.

⁹⁹ *The Limits of Interpretation*, p.50.

position.¹⁰⁰ In short, postmodernism frequently involves an essentially ironic stance, even if irony is by no means peculiar to postmodernism.¹⁰¹ One of the most obvious complaints made against postmodernist art is that it can fail to commit itself to any distinguishable position, hiding instead behind ironic negations at every turn. In fact, as will become clear, I see Eco's fiction as incorporating ironic play in such fundamental ways that we cannot restrict ourselves to a simple appeal to a non-committal post-structuralist defensiveness by means of explanation.

Unfortunately, definitions, theories and taxonomies of irony are multifarious to the extent that any coherent or exhaustive analysis is out of the question.¹⁰² We can, however, make one immediate distinction based on the assumption (which I will confirm in the course of this chapter) that the most interesting ironies in *The Name of the Rose* occur at the level of the novel as an ontological event, an interaction between world and text. To make this kind of claim is to appeal to a distinction set up by Friedrich Schlegel between rhetorical irony and irony as a philosophical

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1989), and Ihab Hassan, *The Postmodern Turn: Essays in Postmodern Theory and Culture* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1986).

¹⁰¹ Critical works on various types of irony associated with various types of postmodernism are abundant, although there are, perhaps understandably, few critics willing to account for the status of both simultaneously. Richard Rorty's *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) offers the view of a critic with whom Eco is heavily engaged, while Linda Hutcheon's *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (London: Routledge, 1994), which contains an assessment of Eco's use of irony in *Foucault's Pendulum*, feels obliged to deliberately distance itself from too close an identification of irony with postmodernism.

¹⁰² See, for example, the extensive taxonomical approaches offered by two recent theorists of the ironic; D.C. Muecke, *Irony and the Ironic* (London: Methuen, 1970), and Wayne C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1974). Both of these, in their different ways (and unacknowledgedly in the case of Booth, who owes a more direct debt to Kierkegaard), can be ultimately traced back to Friedrich Schlegel's taxonomic 'On Incomprehensibility', translated by Peter Firchow, in *Friedrich Schlegel's Lucinde and the Fragments* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971).

position.¹⁰³ It was this distinction that would allow Søren Kierkegaard to develop his influential concept of irony, in which we can identify the three critical elements of philosophical irony.¹⁰⁴

The first element is a discrepancy between statement and meaning, as is found in purely rhetorical irony. In fact, we can immediately relate the action of irony on a basic level with the conjectural paradigm as described by Ginzburg. Where the conjectural paradigm has reality as opaque, but decipherable by attention to detail, a successful reading of rhetorical irony assumes that the utterer's intention is opaque in relation to the normative (obvious, or common sense) meanings offered by the elements of the text. The addressee must attend to both the utterer's likely intention and small details of context and delivery in order to decipher something other than the normative meaning as the true meaning. The use of irony, and its acceptance by the audience as a legitimate rhetorical tool, depends on an implicit belief in the possibility of penetrating signs to access reality.

The Name of the Rose is littered with examples of such rhetorical or verbal irony, all coming from William of Baskerville. Adso observes that William 'laughed only when he said serious things, and remained serious when he was presumably joking', and Ubertino complains that he 'can never tell when you Englishmen are speaking seriously'.¹⁰⁵ As such, William adopts irony as an investigative technique. By

¹⁰³ Friedrich Schlegel, *Critical Fragments*, no.42, in *Philosophical Fragments*, translated by Peter Firchow, foreword by Rodolphe Gasché (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p.5.

¹⁰⁴ Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony, with Continual Reference to Socrates* (together with *Notes of Schelling's Berlin Lectures*), edited and translated with introduction and notes by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). Andrew Cross provides a concise assessment of this work, together with Kierkegaard's later comments on irony, in 'Neither either nor or: The perils of reflexive irony', in *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, edited by Alastair Hannay and Gordon D. Marino (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.125-153.

¹⁰⁵ 'Guglielmo invece rideva solo quando diceva cose serie, e si manteneva serissimo quando presumibilmente cel'ava', *The Name of the Rose*, p.427; p.425; 'Non capisco mai quando voi inglesi parlate seriamente', *The Name of the Rose*, p.69; p.61. Compare Schlegel:

It is a very good sign when the harmonious bores are at a loss about how they should react to this continuous self-parody, when they

always speaking in an ambiguous, ironic manner, William allows his interlocutors to select the meaning that is most appropriate to them, without any definite questions or accusations being put forth. On the most basic level, William is an ironist in the same sense that Sherlock Holmes is one. Holmes feigns greater ignorance of the mystery than he feels, sending out messages that Watson naïvely understands as puzzlement. When Holmes finally shows his hand, all of his obscure and seemingly random questions and investigations make sense. Watson, and through him the reader, is let in on the joke.

William, like Holmes, deals in Socratic *eironeia*. This is marked by a sense of evasion, ambiguity, and misrepresentation. The Watsonian Adso is his *alazon*, his naïve, enthusiastic stooge in a long series of pseudo-Socratic dialogues. These dialogues are inflected, like those between Holmes and Watson, with Friedrich Schlegel's conception of artistic creation as constituted by two distinct, but interdependent, phases. The first is the expansive; naïve, inspired, enthusiastic, imaginative, but blind, and so unfree without its counterpart. This complementary aspect is the contractive, which is reflective, self-conscious, critical and ironic. Just as the expansive requires the contractive, the contractive mode will become dull, affected and uninspired without the gifted randomness of the expansive. It is clear that the William-Adso pair is deliberately constructed to reflect, in two persons, the basic construction of processes described by Schlegel. William, after his resolute successes early in his investigations, becomes trapped among competing hypotheses for the events in the abbey. It is Adso's creative, expansive behaviour that enables him to resolve these hypotheses into definite courses of action.

First, on the sixth day, Adso falls asleep while listening to the 'Dies irae', and has an extensive dream that William is able to interpret as a confused memory of the ecclesiastical parody, the *Coena Cypriani*, interwoven with the tumultuous events he has recently witnessed.¹⁰⁶ It happens that the copy of Aristotle's second book of the

fluctuate endlessly between belief and disbelief until they get dizzy
and take what is meant as a joke seriously and what is meant seriously
as a joke.

-- Friedrich Schlegel, *Critical Fragments*, no.108, in *Philosophical Fragments*, p.13.

¹⁰⁶ On the significance of the *Coena Cypriani* in the novel, see Douglass Parker, 'The Curious Case of the Pharaoh's Polyp, and Related Matters', *SubStance* 14

Poetics, the book being sought, is bound together with a copy of the *Coena Cypriani*, and Adso's dream allows William to make this connection. 'I believe', William tells his bemused companion, 'that your sleeping soul understood more things than I have in six days, and awake...'¹⁰⁷ He hurriedly corrects this overstatement to acknowledge that Adso's dream has not given any new information, but has given him confidence in his interpretive hypothesis. 'I find your dream revealing', he says, 'because it coincides with one of my hypotheses'.¹⁰⁸ Adso's expansive creativity gives William's overly ironic reserve the jolt it needs to determine a particular result.

There soon follows an even clearer example. The verse carved over the entrance to the *finis Africae*, '*Super thronos viginti quatuor*' had remained resolutely puzzling, even though William had for some time been in possession of the clue, '*primum et septimum de quatuor*'. Adso unwittingly presents William with the solution to this when he recalls a grammatical error committed by Salvatore, '*tertius equi*'. As he explains, it 'does not mean the third horse, but the third of the horse, and the third letter of the word 'equus' is u'.¹⁰⁹ This allows William to realise that the clue refers to the word '*quatuor*' itself, not the concept of four. It is an exquisitely appropriate solution for a work in which, as even the title proclaims, there is a great insistence on the fact that we can only interpret signs, not the concepts or objects themselves. More immediately, William's ironic stance is seen once again to operate effectively only in close co-operation with an expansive, naïve companion. Here, Eco manages

(1985), 74-85. See also Coletti, pp.134-9. The presence of the *Coena* is accompanied by one of the spryest intertextual jokes of the novel, whereby the copy seen is apparently the work of 'Magister Alcofribae' – a pseudonym of François Rabelais. This is an acknowledgement of the importance of Bakhtin's conception of the carnivalesque to the novel's discourse on laughter and the overturning of authority, a gesture first identified by Walter E. Stephens, 'Ec[h]o in Fabula', pp.59-60. For Bakhtin's reading of the *Coena*, see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, translated by Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1968), pp.76-86.

¹⁰⁷ 'credo che la tua anima addormentata abbia capito più cose di quante non ne abbia capito io in sei giorni, e da sveglia...', *The Name of the Rose*, p.441; p.438.

¹⁰⁸ 'Trovo il tuo sogno rivelatore perché coincide con una della mie ipotesi', *The Name of the Rose*, p.441; p.438.

¹⁰⁹ 'vorrebbe dire non il terzo cavallo ma il terzo del cavallo, e la terza lettera della parola cavallo è la u', *The Name of the Rose*, p.460; p.457.

to place in a philosophical context the standard detective trope of the ironic, worldly detective paired with the innocent, but useful, sidekick.

Irony, indeed, on the level of the narration as much as the interplay between detective and his direct audience, is the basic form of the Golden Age detective tale. Enjoyment derives neither from bafflement nor from simple comprehension, but from the unravelling of initial bafflement into comprehension. In this sense of deferred understanding the detective model exhibits a property that Kierkegaard defines as ironic: 'a certain superiority deriving from its not wanting to be understood immediately, even though it wants to be understood'.¹¹⁰ This leads on to the second element of irony described by Kierkegaard, perhaps the most troublesome aspect of his definition. Ironic discourse presupposes two different types of audience. The naïve audience understands the ironist at face value, whereas a more sophisticated audience is able to see both the overt meaning and the real meaning hidden underneath. Kierkegaard talks of the 'uninitiated' and the 'inner circle'.¹¹¹ Difficulties arise when we attempt to discern just who these people are. It is possible that the Golden Age detective story, with its almost mandatory naïve detective's sidekick -- a person whose narratological job it is to be uninitiated -- has exacerbated some of these difficulties, by implying that the ironically uninitiated are real people. It is, in fact, far from clear whether Kierkegaard's distinction is intended as a real division of audience.¹¹² While Eco does not concern himself directly with this issue, the matter becomes more clear if we conceive it in terms of his concept of the Model Reader. Eco employs this in an attempt to distinguish adequately between semantic and critical interpretation. The former is everyday interpretation, where the addressee determines a meaning for any given text. 'Critical interpretation', however, for Eco, 'aims at describing and explaining for which formal reasons a given text produces

¹¹⁰ Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony*, p.248.

¹¹¹ Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony*, p.249.

¹¹² Wayne C. Booth supposes Kierkegaard to be describing real audiences, and argues against this in his *A Rhetoric of Irony*, pp.27-31. Cross' reading of Kierkegaard seeks to demonstrate that these audiences are, for Kierkegaard, hypothetical. See especially Cross, p.151, n.3. On the division of audiences in irony, see Roger J. Kreuz and Sam Glucksberg, 'How to be Sarcastic: The Echoic Reminder Theory of Verbal Irony', *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 118 (Dec 1989), 374-86.

a given response'.¹¹³ Although, naturally, either activity can be performed on any given text, Eco maintains that some works 'consciously foresee both kinds of response', in effect

producing *two* Model Readers, a first level, or a naïve one, supposed to understand semantically what the text says, and a second level, or critical one, supposed to appreciate the way in which the text says so.¹¹⁴

The double audience here bears an obvious relation to the double audience of Kierkegaardian irony, although Eco's Model Readers are more clearly abstractions to which the empirical reader has access, or generates as aspects of their own reading process. The type of text Eco chooses to illustrate such a double-operation is the detective story. This, he argues,

displays an astute narrative strategy in order to produce a naïve Model Reader eager to fall into the traps of the narrator (to feel fear or to suspect the innocent one) but usually wants to produce also a critical Model Reader able to enjoy, at a second reading, the brilliant narrative strategy by which the first-level, naïve reader was designed.¹¹⁵

If this is the case, then we may well ask where these two Model Readers stand at the end of *The Name of the Rose*. Eco's example of the detective story as a text that generates, over time, two complementary Model Readers, actually presupposes that the text will unravel to the extent that the reader will be able to determine the true state of affairs, being supplied with a true map of reality by the detective. What of the postmodernist detective story, the Borgesian detective story where the detective's map turns out to be false? The fact is that, in *The Name of the Rose*, the true map of the world is not clear. Eco claims that the novel 'continues to deceive the ingenuous reader until the end, so the ingenuous reader may not even realize that

¹¹³ *The Limits of Interpretation*, p.54.

¹¹⁴ *The Limits of Interpretation*, p.55.

¹¹⁵ *The Limits of Interpretation*, p.55.

this is a mystery in which very little is discovered and the detective is defeated'.¹¹⁶ This reader would have to be remarkably ingenuous to ignore the discussion of just this matter between William and Jorge as they finally confront one another in the *finis Africae*. 'You are proud to show me how, following the dictates of your reason, you arrived at me', mocks Jorge, 'and yet you have shown me you arrived here by following a false reasoning'.¹¹⁷ William is defeated inasmuch as he fails to prevent any of the murders, and he fails either to rescue the disputed book or to bring Jorge to some kind of public justice. However, detective fiction has always prioritised the discovery of information over the strict processes of public justice, from 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', with its absence of a genuine criminal, onwards. The death of Jorge, consuming the poisoned book that has already consumed him with fear, is a poetic one, and perfectly acceptable within the bounds of the detective tradition.¹¹⁸

The real question is not the material destiny of the various factors in the story, but the credibility of any claim within the novel to have understood the real order (or disorder) of its world. William finally realises that there is not one single human agent ordering events, and so believes that he has failed, or has stumbled upon the truth through a false order. This is certainly an analogue of the local structures which Eco promotes as viable intellectual tools in the absence of true authorising systems. William's conclusion, in a playfully anachronistic reference to Wittgenstein, makes the point that a decidedly modern acceptance of the relativity of all knowledge is the only means by which failure can be accepted and life can continue. 'The order that our mind imagines', he tells Adso, 'is like a net, or like a ladder, built to attain

¹¹⁶ *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, p.54.

¹¹⁷ 'Sei orgoglioso di mostrarmi come seguendo la tua ragione sei giunto sino a me e però mi dimostri che ci sei arrivato seguendo una ragione sbagliata', *The Name of the Rose*, p.474; p.471.

¹¹⁸ The first Sherlock Holmes story, *A Study in Scarlet*, ends with the death of the murderer, Joseph Stangerson, before his arrest. Here, poetic justice is served because the killing is portrayed as justified revenge.

something. But afterward you must throw the ladder away, because you discover that, even if it was useful, it was meaningless'.¹¹⁹

This contented post-structuralist ending is persuasive to a degree, more so the more the reader is already primed by an awareness of what Eco as a theorist would argue. The novel, however, resists such a comprehensive modernisation of its cosmology. Jorge follows the plan identified by William. 'I became convinced that a divine plan was directing these deaths', he says, 'for which I was not responsible'.¹²⁰ Even as William and Adso gain entrance to the *finis Africae*, the abbot is suffocating in a secret passage, and Jorge is preparing to kill himself, fulfilling the pattern of seven deaths over seven days, associated with the seven trumpets of the apocalypse. William may identify the pattern as a projection of the desire to see pattern rather than an underlying order, but it is a pattern that does, nevertheless, order the narrative. This is exemplified by the fact that, even after the death of Jorge and the destruction of the book, the apocalyptic pattern continues to be fulfilled. The abbey, a microcosm of the world, ends in an apocalyptic conflagration. It seems that the demands of narrative outweigh the rationalistic demand for a world in which there can be no ultimate structure. As will be explored at greater length in the next section, the novel ends on a point of ambiguity, with the reader uncertain as to what extent the ironic structure is operating, and to what extent an order can be said to exist.

This uncertainty reflects the third and most important aspect of the Kierkegaardian concept of irony -- freedom. Following Schlegel, irony as a philosophical position is supposed to allow the ironic artist to engage in play without commitment to meaning. This philosophical irony is a freeing of irony from its commitment to the conjectural paradigm. This is to say that, in *The Name of the Rose*, as is notoriously the case in Kierkegaard's philosophy, there is not necessarily any ground-level meaning of the text, some ultimate basis of meaning. Of course, the carefully

¹¹⁹ 'L'ordine che la nostra mente immagina è come una rete, o una scala, che si costruisce per raggiungere qualcosa. Ma dopo si deve gettare la scala, perché si scopre che, se pure serviva, era priva di senso', *The Name of the Rose*, p.495; p.492. This is followed by a translation into Middle High German of a quotation from Wittgenstein, which will be discussed in the Conclusion. See page 279.

¹²⁰ 'Allora mi sono convinto che un piano divino regolava queste scomparse di cui io non ero responsabile', *The Name of the Rose*, p.473; p.470.

maintained reality effect of the novel, particularly as a detective fiction, presupposes (and rewards) the operation of the conjectural paradigm in the process of reading itself.¹²¹ This leaves the reader oscillating between the relative success of the system of Ginzburgian conjecture and knowledge of its groundlessness. The manner in which the reader can be expected to negotiate this local structure will be explored in the next section.

¹²¹ By the 'reality effect' of the novel, I am referring to the insistence with which Eco has not only constructed a novel that contains a great deal of verifiable historical information, but also the manner in which he has repeatedly drawn attention to the various ways in which the novel presents a 'real world'. He devotes a section of *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, 'The Novel as Cosmological Event' (pp.23-9), to this issue, which must be, in part, an attempt to claim a place in the venerable tradition of historical European fiction, starting with Sir Walter Scott, and including Alessandro Manzoni. This involves adopting an artistic position that sits ill with his semiotic approaches. 'The problem is to construct the world: the words will practically come on their own', he writes. '*Rem tene, verba sequentur*: grasp the subject, and the words will follow' (*Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, p.24). This formulation, even down to the Latin quotation, forms an antagonistic resonance with the sense in which Eco uses Bernard of Morlay's hexameter '*stat rosa pristina nomine, nomina nuda tenemus*'. I am suggesting that Eco, while well aware of the discrepancies of meaning that such a view will involve, nevertheless finds one of the appeals of writing narrative to be this almost guilty pleasure of constructing a false world to be quasi-real. 'Apart from many important aesthetic reasons', he writes, 'I think that we read novels because they give us the comfortable sensation of living in worlds where the notion of truth is indisputable' (Umberto Eco, *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods: The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures, 1993* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard, 1994), p.91). This is illustrated by the evident, and perhaps mischievous, satisfaction with which the following anecdote is presented:

The film director Marco Ferreri once said to me that my dialogue is like a movie's because it lasts exactly the right length of time. It had to. When two of my characters spoke while walking from the refectory to the cloister, I wrote with the plan before my eyes; and when they reached their destination, they stopped talking.

-- *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, p.25.

William, as he watches the abbey burst into flames, laments: '*Non in commotione, non in commotione Dominus*'.¹²² Such a chaotic, confused end to matters cannot, for him, be evidence of a divine order. This is an important moment in terms of its association of narrative order with divine perfection. God is order, but the status of order in the novel is left determinedly ambiguous.

Nevertheless, the paranoid reading of events as controlled by a single author is recuperable if we take seriously the setting of the novel. Most critical readings enjoy establishing how the novel anachronistically brings current thought to the middle ages.¹²³ Eco has always pointed out with great glee, however, that several instances of supposed anachronism in the novel are actually from contemporary sources.¹²⁴ The greatest anachronism of all, though, would be to unthinkingly read the questionable presence of a cosmological order in the novel as simply postmodernist paranoid play. As I have argued, it is of course play, and Eco is well-versed enough in the paranoid narratorial devices of Pynchon to produce essentially the same effects within his detective story. However, we must take seriously the point that all events narrated in the novel are mediated and expressed by characters to whom a divine order is a definite, and defining, truth. If the truly ingenuous reader of the novel treats it as Sherlock Holmes in cassocks, and therefore reads Jorge as an enjoyably implausible Moriarty figure, then we must bear in mind that less ingenuous readers are constantly being reminded of the characters' theological structuration of thought.

It is demonstrated repeatedly throughout the novel that one of the dominant aspects of the monks' interpretive structure is apocalyptic prophecy.¹²⁵ Upon the introduction of the Franciscan Spiritual, Ubertino of Casale, Adso carefully explains

¹²² *The Name of the Rose*, p.496; p.493.

¹²³ See, for instance, David H. Richter's 'The Mirrored World', in *Reading Eco*, especially pp.262-5, where he argues that these 'problematic anachronisms' are an attempt to carnivalize history and scholarship.

¹²⁴ *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, p.76. Richter's essay identifies several such pseudo-anachronisms.

¹²⁵ On apocalypticism in the novel see Lois Parkinson Zamora, 'Umberto Eco's Revelation: *The Name of the Rose*', *Humanities in the South* 61 (1985), 3-5.

to the reader the extent to which the Spiritual movement associated with Ubertino depended on the Joachite prophecies.¹²⁶ Ubertino promptly casts the political and theological struggle as corresponding to the Joachite 'sixth era of human history, when two Antichrists appear, the mystic Antichrist and the Antichrist proper'.¹²⁷ His words are soon followed by those of Jorge of Burgos, who is given a memorably melodramatic exit line after his dispute with William in the library:

Egli sta venendo! Non perdetevi gli ultimi giorni ridendo sui mostriciattoli dalla pelle maculata e dalla coda ritorta! Non dissipate gli ultimi sette giorni!

He is coming! Do not waste your last days laughing at little monsters with spotted skins and twisted tails! Do not squander the last seven days!¹²⁸

Eventually the correspondence between the deaths in the abbey and the seven trumpets of Revelation is spelt out by old Alinardo of Grottaferrata, who has neither knowledge of or involvement in the various sins committed in the abbey. We should expect the apocalyptic pattern to suggest itself to William not only because he hears it spoken so many times, but also because as a Franciscan, it is already a part of his world of possible ideas. The predominance of this kind of ordering system in the minds of the monks is exemplified by Adso, who insists throughout his narrative on understanding the events in terms of the end of the world.¹²⁹ This even overrules his awareness that, as an old man looking back on his youth in order to narrate it, the days at the abbey cannot have been the time of the Antichrist. So, by dividing the narrative into the seven 'last' days, and describing the destruction of the abbey

¹²⁶ *The Name of the Rose*, pp.56-60; pp.48-52. On Joachism see Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study of Joachism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969). See also Coletti, pp.87-89.

¹²⁷ 'alla seste era della storia umana, in cui appariranno due Anticristi, l'Anticristi mistico e l'Anticristo proprio', *The Name of the Rose*, p.70; p.62.

¹²⁸ *The Name of the Rose*, p.91; p.83.

¹²⁹ Even Adso's name, as has to be pointed out to him (and therefore is pointed out to the reader), recalls Adso of Montier-en-Dier, the author of a popular tenth-century life of the Antichrist.

as 'divine chastisement', Adso ensures that the apocalyptic pattern persists in the narrative structure.¹³⁰

Even for William, the most progressive and perhaps the most heretical of the monks presented in the novel, the possibility of a world without the ordering principle of the deity is, if not unthinkable, certainly unspeakable.¹³¹ As Adso and William contemplate the destruction of the abbey, Adso consoles his master with the thought that he found something, even though the plan he imagined was incorrect. William responds by reaffirming the distance between the material world and divine reality as a theological necessity, condemning humanity to ignorance, and simultaneously, condemning the divine order to unknowability. Adso, in his *naïveté*, asks if this is not paradoxical:

Affermare l'assoluta onnipotenza di Dio e la sua assoluta disponibilità rispetto alle sue stesse scelte, non equivale a dimostrare che Dio non esiste?

Isn't affirming God's absolute omnipotence and His absolute freedom with regard to His own choices tantamount to demonstrating that God does not exist?¹³²

William, as a good philosophical ironist, answers with a question of his own, exposing the problems with which any answer would have to deal, without committing himself to any answer. He asks: 'How could a learned man go on

¹³⁰ 'il castigo divino', *The Name of the Rose*, p.499; p.497.

¹³¹ William's modernity is signalled in various ways for various audiences. Philosophically and theologically he is up to date, influenced not only by Aquinas, but also by William of Ockham, who would have been younger in 1327 than William of Baskerville. Eco's detective also displays knowledge of Arabic technology, identifying magnetic stone, discoursing on medicine and the manufacture of reading glasses, as well as citing the predictions of Roger Bacon. Ethically, William is very much the modern liberal intellectual (Eco's first idea was of a detective-monk in a contemporary setting 'who read the left-wing newspaper *Il Manifesto*', (*Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, p.14)). Semiotically, as I have indicated, he reads Ockhamite thought on concepts and designation in a manner that is sympathetic for a post-structuralist audience.

¹³² *The Name of the Rose*, p.496; p.493.

communicating his wisdom if he answered yes to your question?’¹³³ Adso is unable to determine whether he means that such an answer would render judgements on truth impossible, or simply that he would never be allowed to express such views publicly. We are therefore offered a tantalising glimpse of the conclusion that we, as modern readers, probably expect -- a renunciation of the divine order. Yet such a conclusion would render the novel historically dubious. William’s answer offers, for the modern reader, a suspended ending, of the type witnessed so frequently in Calvino’s later fictions. We remain balanced, unable to distinguish ‘between God and primigenial chaos’.¹³⁴ In other words, the two modern postmodernist alternatives, paranoia and irony, reduce to the same thing. We are left with an absence of determinable authority, no Structure, no reliable meanings.

Such a conclusion appeals to the postmodernist mind-set, and makes the novel rhyme with core postmodernist texts such as Thomas Pynchon’s *The Crying of Lot 49*, where the protagonist is left unable to choose between competing explanations of the world.¹³⁵ We should feel somewhat uneasy, however, about the facility of *The Name of the Rose*’s reduction to postmodernist orthodoxy. If nothing else, the medieval world in which the novel operates, and from which it derives its conceptual frameworks, would have found the postmodernist cosmology unspeakable, as William’s reply indicates. Because we, as readers, can conceptualise and express a postmodernist scepticism toward Structure, we can see how Eco forces William to ironically express the possibility of that scepticism. In accepting this, however, we forget the logic of the characters themselves, that has been carefully and consistently laid out for us throughout the novel.

In *Reflections on The Name of the Rose* Eco jokingly reformulates the history of critical thought in terms of generic fiction. ‘The fundamental question of philosophy’, he declares, ‘is the same as the question of the detective novel: who is guilty?’¹³⁶ This reduction of philosophy to an identity parade of the divine essence

¹³³ ‘Come potrebbe un sapiente continuare a comunicare il suo sapere se rispondesse di sì alla tua domanda?’, *The Name of the Rose*, p.496; p.493.

¹³⁴ ‘tra Dio e il caos primigenio’, *The Name of the Rose*, p.496; p.493.

¹³⁵ Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49* (London: Cape, 1967).

¹³⁶ *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, p.54.

is so obviously inadequate that it is tempting to dismiss the comment entirely as one of Eco's mischievous diversions. If nothing else, however, it can serve to refocus our attention on the internal logic of the novel as a detective story, and ask ourselves, *whodunit?*

There are several possible answers. The first, and most orthodox for a detective story, is Jorge, a mad old man driven to extremes by his attempts to impose an immutable divine order on the world. Otherwise, the abbey as a whole may seem to be responsible, as a place deserted by God. There is also the book itself. It may be seen simply as an autonomous object, a poisoned device that escapes its original purposes.¹³⁷ The book may also be seen as a manifestation, a punishment of the sins of the individual monks. In fact, William identifies the most coherent and internally meaningful answer. Facing Jorge when all mysteries have been revealed, he says: 'You are the Devil'.¹³⁸

'The Devil', for William, 'is the arrogance of the spirit, faith without smile, truth that is never seized by doubt', and Jorge symbolises this, making him the Devil, or at least a means for the Devil to act in the abbey.¹³⁹ This is a formulation designed to appeal to a modern, even atheist, audience at the same as it remains within its proper theological discourse. Again, however, we must be wary of transposing this conclusion to a modern world-view at the price of discarding the conceptual framework in which it is formulated. At the very beginning of the novel, the abbot acknowledges that the Devil can work through second causes, perverting others to his design without their knowledge. The choice is not between a divine order and a

¹³⁷ In this sense, the poisoned book motif may be derived from Alexandre Dumas' *La Reine Margot*. Dumas has Catherine de Medicis apply poison to a book on hunting, in order to murder Henri de Navarre. 'It is a book like any other, except it has lain by so long that the leaves stick together', she tells her son, the Duc d'Alençon, who understands her meaning only too well. 'Do not attempt to read it, for it can only be read by wetting the finger, and turning over each leaf' (Alexandre Dumas, *La Reine Margot, ou, Marguerite de Valois*, in *Oeuvres Illustrées*, 11 vols (Paris: Dufour et Mulat, 1852-7), IV, translated as *Queen Margot* (New York: Hyperion, 1994), p.430). The book, however, is picked up by the King, Charles IX, who is poisoned when he 'devours' a entire chapter. The descriptions, as well as general situation, are mirrored in *The Name of the Rose*.

¹³⁸ 'Tu sei il diavolo', *The Name of the Rose*, p.480; p.477.

¹³⁹ 'il diavolo è l'arroganza dello spirito, la fede senza sorriso, la verità che non viene mai presa dal dubbio', *The Name of the Rose*, p.481; p.477.

cosmic disorder, but between a divine order and a diabolical one. That this choice, too, is a confused one is indicated when Ubertino mentions the belief of some Minorites 'that what the vulgar call the Devil is God Himself, because the Devil is knowledge and God is by definition knowledge'.¹⁴⁰

Following the internal logic of the novel, there is every reason to reject William's theological doubts as much as we are forced to reject his earlier conclusions as to the order of the murders. Abo's explanation, that the Devil may be operating through second causes, is just as consistent, meaningful, and has the additional virtue of explaining the rather improbable series of coincidences linking the murders to Revelation. It simply has the misfortune to be wrong for the world in which most readers live, and in which they are aware Eco also lives. In this way, the fiction displays its ability to escape its philosophical bounds. It is developed from Eco's semiotics and philosophy of interpretation, which it to a certain extent expresses, and on which it is in important ways reliant. However, as fiction, theory cannot enclose it.

Conclusion

The Name of the Rose is a detective story that challenges the 'sick Spinozist universe' of detective stories. William of Baskerville, the detective who initially appears to operate and succeed like the prodigious Sherlock Holmes, in fact operates in a world where the principle of *adequatio rei et intellectus* cannot be guaranteed. His successful predictions, so surprising to those around him, in fact rely more on common sense and sound logic than on the detective's special insight into the criminal mind. Even William's most spectacular abductive guess, the identity and characteristics of the horse Brunellus, ultimately depends more on an intimate knowledge of the attitudes of his fellow monks than on the horse itself. Where William is forced to hypothesise more widely, to understand the nature of events both complex and partly random, the paranoid principles of detection become increasingly unreliable.

¹⁴⁰ 'che ciò che il volgo chiama demonio è Dio stesso, perché il demone è la sapienza e Dio è appunto sapienza', *The Name of the Rose*, p.64; p.57.

Eco initially creates a confidence in the operation of the basic principles of the Golden Age detective story in *The Name of the Rose*, largely through a generous intertextual correspondence to classic detective stories. This is gradually subverted as the detective models quoted become themselves more ironic, more aware of their own paranoid structuration of reality, and more aware of the limitations that need to be placed on the apparently superhuman, mind-reading detectives of Poe and Conan Doyle. To this extent, the novel is a coherent critique of the detective genre in that it illustrates the riskiness of abductive hypothesising, the basic intellectual tool of the Holmesian detective.

At the same time, the allure of Structure -- an essentially paranoid appeal to ultimate order -- remains constant, and Eco's novel easily resists any avant-gardist temptation to negate structure on the narrative plane. This tension between a denial of anything more than local, tentative structures and a retention of the narrative pleasures of Structure is sustained by a systemic use of irony that owes much to the philosophical irony promoted by Friedrich Schlegel and Søren Kierkegaard. *The Name of the Rose* is full of the pleasures of such irony, but the succeeding two novels will witness a more circumspect appraisal, taking in the potential dangers of an utterly ironic stance.

CHAPTER THREE

The Diabolical Logic of *Foucault's Pendulum*

Introduction

At first sight, *Foucault's Pendulum* resembles a detective fiction only in the most rudimentary of ways, in that it, like many other types of novel, features a quest for meaning. Nevertheless, I will demonstrate that it depends heavily on its readers' awareness of detective fiction, and of the tropes familiar in twentieth-century versions of the genre. The perhaps surprising formal flexibility of the detective genre, particularly in the way in which it has been adopted by a series of experimental writers to express their fictional manipulations, while at the same time preserving its fundamental form, gives Eco the narrative space within which to present a novel that conforms to the expectations of post-structuralist theory, while at the same time enjoying some very traditional narrative pleasures.

On its most basic level, the novel concerns the insidious spread of an essentially paranoid mode of interpretation. The narrator of the novel, Casaubon, meets Jacopo Belbo and Diotallevi (all three hereafter collectively referred to as the Editors), who work for a Milanese publishing house, Garamond. They are visited by a peculiar individual, Colonel Ardenti, who shows them two old manuscripts, one half-obliterated, the other encoded, which he claims refer to secret knowledge preserved through the centuries by the survivors of the Knights Templar. After Ardenti mysteriously disappears, the Editors forget the experience, concentrating on the now-collapsing social protest movement of the late nineteen sixties. Disillusioned with politics, Casaubon escapes to Brazil for a few years with his girlfriend. He only returns to Italy when they part company, following her surprising enthrallment by a syncretic 'voodoo' rite.

Back in Italy, Casaubon finds permanent work with Garamond, and learns that it has another arm, Manutius, a vanity press. The Editors find themselves dealing with an increasing number of manuscripts dealing with occult, conspiratorial and Hermetic matters. Gradually, they are persuaded that it is worth publishing these

authors, whom they consider risible, and refer to amongst themselves as 'Diabolicals'. Agliè, an old acquaintance of Casaubon from Brazil who claims to be the immortal Comte de Saint-Germain, provides inside knowledge on the Diabolical world. After the Editors are taken by Agliè to a Hermetic party, where they see visions and what appear to be homunculi, they decide that they can create a Diabolical text better than any of their paranoid authors, and so start to generate an all-inclusive theory of secret knowledge through history -- the Plan -- as an ironic game. The Plan proceeds apace until it is told to two other people. The first is Casaubon's current, pregnant girlfriend, Lia, who considers it an abomination, an unhealthy obsession. The second is Agliè, who takes it seriously. Soon, Belbo has been blackmailed into travelling to Paris, where he is taken to the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers. Convinced that Belbo knows the final secret of the Plan, Agliè has gathered many Diabolicals together for the unveiling of the secret knowledge under the Foucault Pendulum -- the device that demonstrates the rotation of the earth. Casaubon manages to sneak in, only to see Belbo refuse to divulge the (imaginary) secret, even as he is threatened by having the wire of the Pendulum put around his neck. The meeting descends into chaos, and Belbo is accidentally hung. Casaubon escapes, and flees to Belbo's childhood home in Piedmont, where he contemplates his foolishness, and awaits the possible arrival of the Diabolicals.

If it is difficult to find a category in which to place *Foucault's Pendulum* quite as easily as *The Name of the Rose* is placed in the detective genre, this is probably because the novel calls upon several related genres that together inhabit the space marked out for twentieth century sequels of the 'classical' detective story of Poe, Conan Doyle, Sayers, Christie *et al.* The novel draws from the hard-boiled detective form, the spy story, paranoid fiction, as well as the Hermetic or occult adventure narrative. This last is a peculiar modern publishing phenomenon, most clearly illustrated by the best-selling *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* mentioned in the novel, and more recently by the occult travel narratives of Graham Hancock.¹ As with *The Name of the Rose*, critical work has tended to concentrate on establishing

¹ Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln, *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* (London: Cape, 1982); Graham Hancock, *The Sign and the Seal: A Quest for the Lost Ark of the Covenant* (London: Heinemann, 1992), and *Fingerprints of the Gods: A Quest for the Beginning and the End* (London: Heinemann, 1995).

ways in which *Foucault's Pendulum* reflects Eco's semiotic theories.² Self-evidently, the novel must bear the mark of Eco's other work, but I feel that it is more important to establish the novel's generic and narrative field of reference, from which derive any observations it may have on the nature of interpretation, and which render it comprehensible as a novel.³ To this extent, we must examine how the novel presents itself as a fiction of detection.

"Do you have the password?"

The drama of the novel really begins with Casaubon's attempt to gain access to Abulafia, the computer on which Belbo keeps all of his files. Sitting down in front of the machine, Casaubon is faced by the question: 'Do you have the password?'" He realises that it would take him hundreds of years to work through all the mathematically possible combinations. 'I would have to proceed' he concludes, 'by conjecture'.⁵ The logical procedure at issue in breaking the password is quickly apparent even to a reader unaware of Eco's theoretical interest in such guesswork, but for the reader with either *The Sign of Three* or *The Name of the Rose* in mind,

² The most comprehensive critical reading of *Foucault's Pendulum* is provided by the selection of articles published in *Modern Language Notes* 107 (1992). Of these, Carl A. Rubino's "Oh Language, Diabolical and Holy": Notes on the Extravagances of *Foucault's Pendulum*, 828-39, acknowledges the narrative fecundity of the novel, while Robert Artigiani's 'Image-Music-Pinball', 855-76, explores its relationships with contemporary linguistic theory. Alicia Juarrero's 'The Message Whose Message It is That There is No Message', 892-904, usefully examines the novel in terms of theories of paradox. Beyond these articles, Brian McHale devotes a chapter of his book, *Constructing Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1992) to *Foucault's Pendulum*.

³ Two analyses that respect this distinction are JoAnn Cannon's 'The Imaginary Universe of Umberto Eco: A Reading of *Foucault's Pendulum*', *Modern Fiction Studies* 38:4 (Winter 1992), 895-909, and Ken Kirkpatrick's 'The Conspiracy of the Miscellaneous in *Foucault's Pendulum*', *Studies in Twentieth Century Literature*, 19:2 (Summer 1995), 171-84.

⁴ 'Hai la parola d'ordine?', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.30; p.28.

⁵ 'Bisognava procedere per congettura', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.30; p.28, my translation. Weaver offers 'inductive guesswork', perhaps trying to indicate the particularity of the method.

this is familiar territory. In fact, Casaubon's attempts to find the password that allows access to Abu's hidden knowledge can stand as a master-piece of the novel, just as the Brunellus episode stood as a master-piece of *The Name of the Rose*. There, the interpretive success of William's 'mind-reading' of the monks seemed to promise a narrative world in which abductive speculation could lead to the truth. Here, Casaubon's attempts to perform a similar trick promise a somewhat different narrative world, where abduction is less reliable.

First, Casaubon tries each of the ten Sefirot, already suggested as significant through his use of them as a means of structuring the narrative itself. His attempts at investigation are governed by a detective model that is found throughout the novel: the hard-boiled stories of Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett. He remembers being labelled by Belbo as 'the Sam Spade of publishing'.⁶ This provokes him to behave according to the hard-boiled version of the classical detective procedure:

Cercai di immedesimarmi nei processi mentali di Belbo, che aveva scritto fumando compulsivamente, e bevendo, e guardandosi intorno. Andai in cucina a versarmi l'ultimo goccio di whisky nell'unico bicchiere pulito che trovai, tornai alla consolle, la schiena contro la spalliera, le gambe sul tavolo, bevendo a piccoli sorsi (non faceva così Sam Spade -- o forse no, era Marlowe?) e girando lo sguardo intorno. I libri erano troppo lontani e non si potevano leggere i titoli sulle coste.

Presi l'ultimo sorso di whisky, chiusi gli occhi, li riaprii. Davanti a me la stampa secentesca.

I tried to put myself inside Belbo's mind. He'd been chain-smoking, drinking, and looking around as he wrote. I went to the kitchen to pour myself the last drop of whisky in the only clean glass I could find, returned to the screen, leant back on the chair, feet up on the table, taking a little sip (just like Sam Spade -- or was it Marlowe?) and turned to look around. The books were too distant and I couldn't read the titles on their spines.

I finished the whiskey, shut my eyes, opened them again. In front of me was the seventeenth-century engraving.⁷

⁶ 'il Sam Spade dell'editoria', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.30; p.28. Sam Spade is Hammett's most famous detective, appearing in *The Maltese Falcon*, famously filmed by John Huston in 1941.

⁷ *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.31; p.29-30, my translation.

The engraving is an allegory of the Rosicrucian Fraternity, in which its 'invisible college' is pictured as a peculiar wheeled tower. The engraving is the one which is used as a frontispiece in Frances Yates' book on the Rosicrucian manifestoes.⁸ The introduction of the Rosicrucians at this stage of the narrative, with Casaubon registering no surprise that such a print should be in Belbo's room, and amid frequent mentions of a secret organisation against whom the Editors are pitched, primes the reader to anticipate the significant intrusion of Rosicrucianism into the novel. We will come to see just how powerful a symbol Rosicrucianism is for the kinds of interpretive error in which *Foucault's Pendulum* deals. Here, however, having alerted the reader to the Rosicrucian theme, Belbo's print allows for a further ironic recapitulation of some of the interpretive work of *The Name of the Rose*. William of Baskerville's other certain success after the identification of the horse Brunellus was the mapping of the library through an external reading of the geometry of the Aedificium. Casaubon, caught in the Hermetic mind-set, counts up arches, doors, turrets, openings and windows on the Rosicrucian tower, arriving at the number thirty-six. Variations and factors of this number fail to operate as a password, indicating to the reader who has come from *The Name of the Rose* that the abductive guesses that worked in the former novel may well be inoperable in this one. For the attentive reader, Casaubon's procedure also indicates a decline from the high logical standards represented by William of Baskerville. The medieval detective's best attributes had been a judicious application of Ockham's Razor matched to a sharp appreciation of Thomist logic. Casaubon's numerological guess demonstrates that in his mind -- and in Belbo's mind, so far as he can guess it -- logical rigour has succumbed to the paranoid pressure of perceived significance. Instead of seeking a definite answer to a definite question, Casaubon is casting about amongst objects until something appears significant. He picks up on the number thirty-six because 'for ten years that number had haunted me'.⁹

⁸ France A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1972). The print is bound with the British Library's copy of a Rosicrucian publication, Theophilus Schweighardt's *Speculum sopicum Rhodo-Stauroticum, Das ist: Weilauffige Entdeckung des Colleggii und axiomatum von sondern erleuchten Fraternitet Christi-Rosen Creutz* ([n.p.]: [n.pub.], 1618). See Yates, pp.93-4.

⁹ 'Da più di dieci anni quel numero mi ossessionava', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.32; p.31.

Aware that Eco is interested in the manner in which the reader is encouraged to receive the text through the formation of the Model Reader, and also aware that he notoriously described the opening of *The Name of the Rose* as a penance, through which the reader must be purified, any reader trying, like a good detective, to second-guess the authorial strategy must suspect that Casaubon's investigative troubles are designed as a form of intellectual armament for the reader against the paranoia and madness to follow.¹⁰ William's acts of interpretive reconstruction were a model, within *The Name of the Rose*, for good interpretation, even if they still had the potential to be wrong. In *Foucault's Pendulum*, however, we are served warning that the structure is useless outside its context. An interpretive structure is reliable only within its locality, as William's reading of the minds of the monks was reliable only within that well-defined intellectual environment.

Casaubon's next guess seems to confirm this. Noting the Tetragrammaton at the top of the print, he toys with various transcriptions of this. None of them work, but the exercise serves the narrative purpose of introducing the reader to the cabbalistic practices, particularly temurah (the recombination of the letters of the Torah), which will stand at the heart of the creation of the Plan. The mention of the Tetragrammaton also returns us to Borges' 'Death and the Compass', where the appeal of a false pattern based on the name of God led the detective on to his death. *The Name of the Rose* presented us with one manipulation of this theme, and so, perhaps, will *Foucault's Pendulum*.

The other guesses offer an ironic recapitulation of more interpretive hypotheses active in Eco's first novel. One of the numbers that Casaubon tries as a password is 666, recalling the apocalyptic fever in which all of the monks of the previous book had lived. He also tries 'Sophia', standing for wisdom, but also as an oblique reference to the woman, Lorenza Pellegrini, haunting Belbo's life. The prioritisation of the name of the beloved strongly recalls the manner in which *The Name of the Rose* plays with the fact that Adso's beloved is unnamed. After the girl is condemned to death as a witch, Adso wants to call out her name in the love-stricken manner

¹⁰ 'Therefore those first hundred pages are like a penance or an initiation, and if someone does not like them, so much the worse for him', *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, p.41.

indicated by chivalrous romances. 'This was the only earthly love of my life,' he laments, 'and I could not, then or ever after, call that love by name'.¹¹

Casaubon is finally forced to admit that his efforts to behave as a good abductive detective, penetrating Belbo's thoughts, are in vain. 'I was inventing an explanation and deluding myself that it was true,' he admits. 'It was like the Plan: I was taking my wishes as reality'.¹² While *The Name of the Rose* was still, to an extent, a 'sick Spinozist universe', here is an early warning that in *Foucault's Pendulum* the reliability of abductive guessing may be small or non-existent. Casaubon finally finds the password not by guessing at all, but by modifying his approach to the problem. Upset that his guess of 'Sophia' did not work (being emotionally involved with the woman himself), Casaubon rages: 'You stupid machine, you feel no emotion at the thought of Lorenza'.¹³ In his anger, Casaubon finally give a direct answer to the question 'Do you have the password?'. The password, of course, is 'no'. The significance of this in the context of the rest of the novel is plain. There is no secret, and the pursuit of a secret meaning is delusional. The manner of discovery, however, is just as significant. After his abductive failures, Casaubon types 'no' more in anger than in expectation. This stumbling onto the correct answer is similar to the way in which solutions in *The Name of the Rose* are found as a result of intuitions, mistakes, and dreams. In this case, Casaubon, in his state of high emotion, finally answers the question directly and as addressed to himself, instead of putting himself in the place of a putative alternate addressee.

The emphasis falls, therefore, on the form of communication, and on the correct apprehension of both the utterer's intention, and the expected audience. The novel will obsessively return to this theme, arguing consistently for a common-sense

¹¹ 'Dell'unico amore terreno della mia vita non sapevo, e non seppi mai, il nome', *The Name of the Rose*, p.409; p.407. Jean-Jacques Annaud's 1986 film of *The Name of the Rose*, unable to build on any discussion of the arbitrariness of signification, promotes this line to the very end of the film, seeking to use it as an explanation of the title.

¹² 'Mi stavo inventando una spiegazione e mi illudevo che fosse vera. Come per il Piano: prendevo i miei desideri per la realtà', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.40; p.41, my translation.

¹³ 'Macchina stupida, non ti emozioni neppure al pensiero di Lorenza', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.40; p.41.

approach to interpretation. In *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* Eco places against the possibility of an infinite realm of interpretation the idea of 'moderateness'. 'Being moderate means being within the *modus*', he says, 'that is, within limits and within measure'.¹⁴ It means, for Eco, respecting the intention of the text -- *intentio operis* -- rather than simply using the text for one's own purposes.¹⁵ Eco's stance on interpretation encompasses, therefore, a belief that there is a normative position with regard to a text. This normative position, the Model Reader, is one that, while it may foresee a range of interpretive possibilities for itself, refuses to countenance interpretations that go against the context and form of the text itself.¹⁶ Even in the case of Casaubon and Abu, however, it is unclear

¹⁴ *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p.26. This collection stands in a broadly similar relationship to *Foucault's Pendulum* as does *Reflections on The Name of the Rose* to the first novel. Eco's three lectures sketch out his position as regards interpretive reasonability with liberal reference to *Foucault's Pendulum*, particularly with regard to the Hermetic model of interpretation ('semiosi ermetica') described in the novel, which will be explored in greater depth later in this chapter. Of the other contributors -- Richard Rorty, Jonathan Culler and Christine Brooke-Rose -- the first and last concentrate their attention mostly on the novel. Of all of the novels, *Foucault's Pendulum* seems to be the one which least disagrees with Eco's contemporary theoretical concerns, although, as explored below, Rorty finds there to be a discrepancy. See Richard Rorty, 'The Pragmatist's Progress', in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, pp.89-108, especially pp.92-3.

¹⁵ This, in fact, is the basis of Rorty's disagreement with Eco's attempt to limit the field of valid interpretation. According to Rorty's pragmatics, one cannot distinguish between use and interpretation. Adopting a position that owes much to the anti-essentialism of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, Rorty argues that 'all anybody does with anything is use it' (*Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p.93). He understands *Foucault's Pendulum* as arguing for a textual pragmatics, regardless of Eco's theoretical position. For this definition of pragmatism, see Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982) and *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Eco attempts to disentangle his Peircean 'pragmaticism' from Rorty's pragmatism in 'Unlimited Semiosis and Drift: Pragmaticism vs. "Pragmatism"', Chapter Two in *The Limits of Interpretation*, pp.23-43.

¹⁶ This position is clearly not without its problems. Rorty identifies an ambiguity in Eco's formulation, which would have the text determine a specific Model Reader, but one that might still be able to accept a potentially infinite number of possible interpretations. See *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, pp.96-7. Jonathan Culler's response, which simultaneously takes on Eco and Rorty from the basic position of defending deconstructive criticism, brilliantly identifies points on which both of them caricature radical deconstruction in order to suit their own purposes. In particular, Culler is concerned by Eco's adoption of the belief that deconstruction can ever be

whether the narrative episode tallies with the theoretical position it apparently promotes. Casaubon finally gets the correct answer, but is it 'right'? Is it, in other words, the most reasonable, appropriate response to the interpretive problem he faces?

The correct answer -- 'no' -- depends on reading a request for a password -- 'Do you have the password?' -- as, instead, a direct question that might be located in a conversation. This, in fact, would be anti-contextual, reading against the normative interpretation of the text. The episode, however, persuades the reader that the reverse is true, largely through the strong intertextual resonance it produces with the most memorable of Chesterton's Father Brown stories, 'The Oracle of the Dog'. In this story, Brown is asked to comment on a case where a dog has appeared to herald the death of its master. The dog, he is told by his gullible friend, 'suddenly threw up his head and sent up a howl or wail of woe'.¹⁷ Brown is typically unimpressed by his friend's belief that the dog had a premonition of the death, and conjectures that the dog was protesting about the way in which the stick it was chasing had sunk in the water. This provides him with the solution to the mystery. The stick, really a sword-stick, was the murder weapon, and the murderer was cleverly disposing of it in an inconspicuous manner. The point of the story is Father Brown's ability to understand the world by concentrating on the appropriate, moderate interpretation of events, taking each sign in its correct context. 'And it seemed to me', he says, 'that in all this lurid halo of dog superstitions nobody was really thinking about the dog at all'.¹⁸ The episode with the password, like Eco's novel as a whole, is an attempt to

equated with the kind of unlimited semiosis he has perceived in Hermetic thought. 'I believe', he says, 'that Eco has been misled by his concern with limits or boundaries' (Jonathan Culler, 'In Defence of Overinterpretation', in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p.120). Culler's other insightful observation is that Eco, in effect, protests too much about aberrant, paranoid overinterpretation. 'No one who was not deeply attracted to "overinterpretation" could create the characters and the interpretive obsessions that animate his novels' (op. cit., p.110-1). Culler's point is that good criticism, like good fiction, should not be moderate but immoderate, ludic, interesting. Although this issue is beyond the scope of the present study, the playfulness of fiction in comparison to systematising theory is clearly a factor of immense importance in our reading of *Foucault's Pendulum*, and will be considered in this chapter.

¹⁷ *The Penguin Complete Father Brown*, p.355.

¹⁸ *The Penguin Complete Father Brown*, p.364.

replicate Father Brown's moderateness, particularly as *Foucault's Pendulum* sets itself against a perceived flood of superstition. 'It's part of something I've noticed more and more in the modern world,' says Brown,

[...] something that's arbitrary without being authoritative. People readily swallow the untested claims of this, that, or the other. It's drowning all your old rationalism and scepticism, it's coming in like a sea; and the name of it is superstition.¹⁹

Of course, Father Brown has a strong centre around which to build his moderateness. It is to this that Casaubon returns when attempting to assess, near the end of the novel, the facts upon which he can rely. He half-remembers the conclusion to 'The Oracle of the Dog', paraphrasing Father Brown's summarising statement to the story. 'And someone else -- was it Chesterton?', thinks Casaubon, 'said that when men stop believing in God, it isn't that they then believe in nothing: they believe in everything'.²⁰ Father Brown's belief in just the one extraordinary thing -- God -- allows him an interpretive structure that is, if not definitive, at least definite. Eco's paranoid detective story cannot allow itself such an omniscient figure as Father Brown, but it is attempting to reach a similar conclusion, not by defining what is moderate, but by exploring what is immoderate.

'We can accept a sort of Popperian principle', writes Eco, 'by which if there are no rules that help to ascertain which interpretations are the 'best' ones, there is at

¹⁹ *The Penguin Complete Father Brown*, p.367-8.

²⁰ 'Ma c'era un altro (forse Chesterton?) che aveva detto: da quando gli uomini non credono più in Dio, non è che non credano più a nulla, credono a tutto', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.492; p.620. The hesitation over identifying the source of this point is interesting. It certainly is Chesterton that Casaubon has in mind. Father Brown says that 'it's the first effect of not believing in God that you lose your common sense and can't see things as they are. Anything that anybody talks about, and says there's a good deal in it, extends itself infinitely like a vista in a nightmare' (*The Penguin Complete Father Brown*, p.368). Casaubon obviously has modified the words to fit his sense, but the effect of the hesitation is perhaps simply to highlight the reference, or otherwise to register the resonance it makes with a statement by Sir Karl Popper quoted as the epigraph to the chapter: 'The conspiracy theory of society [...] comes from abandoning God and then asking: "Who is in his place?"' (Karl R. Popper, 'Towards a Rational Theory of Tradition', Chapter Four in *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*, fourth (revised) edition (London: Routledge, 1972), p.123).

least a rule for ascertaining which ones are 'bad'.²¹ As a theoretical position this is, perhaps, perversely negative. As the theme of a work of fiction, it appears, at the very best, partial. Detective stories, Chesterton's as much as anyone else's, permit narrative coverage of crime, sin, perversity and madness, under the banner of the detective's moral quest to retain order. It is legitimate to wonder in many cases whether the appeal of the story lies in the consolatory resolution or in the transgressive pleasures that precede it. In the same way, we must consider throughout *Foucault's Pendulum*, in particular, the discrepancy between the theoretical stance from which it visibly derives and the qualities of narrative pleasure that it offers. We must read the novel bearing in mind Jonathan Culler's allegation that Eco's defence of moderation is essentially sterile. 'In his hermetical soul', says Culler of Eco,

which draws him to those whom he calls the 'followers of the veil', he too believes that overinterpretation is more interesting and intellectually valuable than 'sound', moderate interpretation.²²

The question is whether Eco's fiction is ultimately subservient to his recent theoretical work, or whether this work is actually serving to justify the novelist's interest in the passionate, the bizarre and the marginal. It is possible that Eco is still on some level an apocalyptic intellectual, guiltily interested in what he rationally knows to be immoderate and outlandish. The energy expended by his commentators on finding theoretical rigour within the novels may also belong to the embarrassed realisation that what Eco really enjoys writing about is popular fiction. There are some uncomfortable silences in his work (both fiction and theory) where we might expect to find an academic writer addressing certain figures in the novel of detection. Dostoyevsky's novels of crime and detection and the paranoid landscapes of Franz Kafka hardly register in Eco's version of the canon, supplanted by Eugène Sue, Edgar Allan Poe, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Ian Fleming. If *Foucault's Pendulum* ends with a plea for a return to the reasonable, the obvious, it also contains an element of William of Baskerville's ambiguous response to the possible absence of

²¹ *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p.52.

²² *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p.110.

God proposed at the end of *The Name of the Rose*. His answer was balanced between a suggestion of logical necessity and the practical pressure of the expectations of the community. I would suggest that there is another form of embarrassment present in Eco's fiction. Perhaps he is still, to an extent, embarrassed that he wishes to write in a mode that reflects the classic realist writers of his youth. It may also be, however, that he is embarrassed because his academic colleagues will still not accept that he does so.

The Hard-Boiled Detective: From Detection to Suspicion

We have already noted Eco's attempts to negotiate a path between an 'apocalyptic' fear of mass culture and an 'integrated' surrender of critical attitudes to it. This was a proposition he felt it necessary to make in 1964, in the collection *Apocalittici e integrati*, against the background of a neo-avant-garde that had little time for mass culture. Two decades later, after Thomas Pynchon's novels of Californian conspiracy culture, the commodity fetishism of Jay McInerney and Brett Easton Ellis, Salman Rushdie's Bollywood epics, and the outrageous science-fiction of William Burroughs or J.G. Ballard, the question could hardly still have been one of whether to acknowledge mass culture, but of how to respond to it. *Foucault's Pendulum*, like Eco's other two novels, is understandably seen by many critics as 'a vast maze, a tangled web of arcane references, coded messages, metaphysical speculation, and historical trivia which only the author can successfully unravel'.²³ Much of the critical activity surrounding the novels is marked by a pleasurable contest which consists in an attempt to spot the author's recondite references.²⁴ We must be careful, however, not to accept this account as though it represents the reading experience itself. *Foucault's Pendulum* constantly gestures towards types of information and modes of behaviour that will be, at best, on the margins of the

²³ JoAnn Cannon, 'The Imaginary Universe of Umberto Eco: A Reading of *Foucault's Pendulum*', 895.

²⁴ A typical claim of this type is that made by Linda Hutcheon when, in discussing the novel's use of irony, she declares that she would interpret 'Eco's text as intending (from the marker embedded in its title onward) to ironize the theories of [Michel] Foucault in particular' (Linda Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge*, p.126).

'encyclopaedia' of most readers. As we will see, though, the novel is actually quite generous in ensuring that the reader is never left stranded in a discourse for which there has been no initiation. Eco builds his Model Readers carefully. We should, instead, attend to those devices and references upon which Eco relies as being pre-existent in his readers, for this is where the novel must begin both its narrative structure and its argument. Eco clearly indicates that the reader's encyclopaedia should contain an awareness of certain types of genre fiction when he has Jacopo Belbo say that 'maybe only cheap fiction gives us the true measure of reality'.²⁵ Several critics have identified the fiction of Thomas Pynchon as the closest analogue for *Foucault's Pendulum*.²⁶ In fact, the novel itself makes clear from the start that it wishes to be read through the filter of the detective novel, albeit not the Golden Age type that served *The Name of the Rose* so well. Casaubon's identification of himself as 'a kind of private eye of learning' asks the reader to approach his narrative as though he were a world-weary private investigator in some novel by Raymond Chandler or Dashiell Hammett.²⁷ He describes his modest services to publishers as 'a cultural investigation agency', and says of his office that 'it was like being in an American skyscraper of the thirties; if I'd had a glass door, I'd have felt like Marlowe'.²⁸ The American hard-boiled story is an easily-caught reference, as it still impinges upon international mass culture, largely based on the success of *film noir* adaptations from the work of Chandler and Hammett.²⁹

²⁵ 'Forse è solo il feuilleton che ci dà la vera misura della realtà', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.389; p.495.

²⁶ See, in particular, Olav Severijnen, '"Bin ich ein Gott?": The Problem of Narrative in Umberto Eco's *Foucault's Pendulum* and Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*', *Neophilologus* 75 (1991), 327-41.

²⁷ 'una specie di piedipiatti del sapere', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.179; p.224.

²⁸ 'un'agenzia di informazioni culturali', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.179; p.224; and 'Sembrava di essere in un grattacielo americano degli anni trenta, mi sarebbe bastato avere la porta a vetri e mi sarei sentito Marlowe', p.179; p.225.

²⁹ Both Chandler and Hammett had some success in Hollywood, both in having their novels adapted, and as writers for the screen themselves. Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* was filmed twice, latterly with great success, and the film of *The Thin Man* (1934) was so popular that it generated five sequels. The films of *Farewell My Lovely* (1944), *The Big Sleep* (1946) and *The Lady in the Lake* (1946), all featuring Chandler's Marlowe, helped to establish the American *film noir*. Chandler

The assumed ubiquity of this referential field for Eco can be easily demonstrated. In naming his narrator 'Casaubon', Eco painstakingly distances him from the character Edward Casaubon in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, so that the reader can pursue the more relevant reference -- Isaac Casaubon, the philologist who redated the *Corpus Hermeticum* as a set of third century AD mystical writings, rather than the distilled wisdom of pre-Biblical Egypt, as they were initially taken to be.³⁰ He displays no such need to point out that the Marlowe to whom Casaubon compares himself is not Conrad's storytelling sailor (although, given Belbo's identification of himself with Conrad's *Lord Jim*, this might be understandable), nor the playwright Christopher Marlowe, but Raymond Chandler's detective-narrator, Philip Marlowe. The hard-boiled detective story is the first interpretive frame through which we are expected to read *Foucault's Pendulum*.

The hard-boiled crime story preserves much of the basic structure of the 'classical', or Golden Age, detective fiction. It has an identical basic cast of private detective, murderer, corpse and bungling police. The hard-boiled sleuth addresses many of the same problems as the classic detective, particularly fulfilling the role of the seeker for justice, bridging the gap between the often fruitless pursuit of criminals within the law, as performed by the police, and the illegal methods of the

himself had screen-writing success with *Double Indemnity* (1944), *The Blue Dahlia* (1946) and Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train* (1951), the first two of which gained him Academy Award Nominations. See William Luhr, *Raymond Chandler and Film*, second edition (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1991).

³⁰ Eco's attempt to disentangle these meanings is, nevertheless, ambiguous. Upon being introduced to Casaubon, Belbo asks if his was not also the name of a character in *Middlemarch*. 'I don't know', replies Casaubon. 'There was also a Renaissance philologist by that name, but we're not related' ('Non so. In ogni caso era anche un filologo del Rinascimento, credo. Ma non siamo parenti'), *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.58; p.63. The exchange certainly gives the prompt towards the issue of the dating of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, should the reader require, but it points equally back to Eliot's novel, in which Edward Casaubon is attempting to write *A Key to All Mythologies*. Clearly, Eliot also named her character after Isaac Casaubon, and the reference remains interesting by virtue of the Quixotic, paranoid project upon which the character is engaged. Eco acknowledges as much, saying

text plus standard encyclopedia knowledge entitle any cultivated reader to find that connection. It makes sense. Too bad for the empirical author who was not as smart as his reader.

-- *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p.82.

criminals themselves. The private detective has always had an antagonistic relationship with the police, from Dupin and Holmes onwards. This is largely because the private detective is willing to break laws in order to achieve justice. Sherlock Holmes, for instance, argues that 'there are certain crimes which the law cannot touch, and which therefore to some extent, justify private revenge'.³¹ This tendency ultimately takes its source in the mental identification the detective genre expects between the detective and his *alter ego*, the master criminal.³² The detective's criminality becomes more marked in the hard-boiled tradition, because, as crime itself appears to become more casually violent, the detective becomes correspondingly more violent in order to match those he is seeking to defeat.

The ambiguous position of the detective means that he falls foul of the forces of law almost as often as the criminals he is after. It is such a common occurrence in Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett for the police to find the detective at the scene of a crime that it is no wonder that the private detective is frequently mistaken for the criminal. In *The Maltese Falcon* the detective, Sam Spade, is repeatedly visited by the police, who regard him as a suspect in the murder of his partner.³³ In fact, the suspicion that he had been having an affair with his partner's wife and his lack of compunction in lying to the police conspire to portray him as amoral, and potentially in league with the criminals. The moral dilemma in the second half of the story is whether Spade, described as a 'blond satan', will turn in the criminals or accept their money.³⁴ So great is the emphasis on his amorality that the reader is

³¹ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (London: George Newnes, 1905), edition cited (London: Leopard, 1996), p.196.

³² Sherlock Holmes sees Professor Moriarty as his match, saying that 'I had at last met an antagonist who was my intellectual equal' (Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Final Problem', in *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (London: George Newnes, 1893), edition cited (London: Leopard, 1996), p.250). The Holmes-Moriarty relationship is characterised by parallelism, up to their supposed mutual death at the Reichenbach Falls. Most Golden Age detectives ended up with an arch-nemesis, who would often tempt their adversary to join them in a life of crime. Chesterton typically produced his own, homely version of this trope, with Father Brown converting his *alter ego*, Flambeau, into a repentant and respectable citizen.

³³ Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon* (New York: Knopf, 1930), edition cited (New York: Vintage, 1992).

³⁴ *The Maltese Falcon*, p.3.

almost surprised when he turns down, and turns in, the murderous Brigid O'Shaughnessy, saying 'Don't be too sure I'm as crooked as I'm supposed to be'.³⁵

At first glance, the hard-boiled genre is a relatively poor model for the ironic intellectual play of *Foucault's Pendulum*. Certainly, the typical hard-boiled detective, such as Chandler's Philip Marlowe, tends to engage in remarkably little actual investigation. Instead he tends to blunder into danger, where he either fights his way out or wakes, much later, with the criminals gone, and only a sore head for his trouble. Chandler was in fact a notoriously poor plotter, who suppressed early stories in order to re-use the plots, and whose principle was: 'When in doubt, have a man come through a door with a gun in his hand'.³⁶ Casaubon, while certainly not a classic abductive reasoner in the mould of Sherlock Holmes, neither particularly fits this model. His activities consist primarily of researching links in a library for his publishers, and having speculative discussions with his workmates. In fact, as explored in Chapter One, both Casaubon and Belbo determinedly avoid the direct confrontation which they nostalgically crave. Belbo frequently repeats his conclusion that he 'wasn't cut out to be a protagonist', settling instead for the role of intelligent spectator.³⁷ Seen in this way, a more appropriate model would appear to be found in the worlds of publishing or the academy. Whilst these disciplines are important elements of the novel, and the account of the Manutius vanity press is wittily

³⁵ *The Maltese Falcon*, p.215.

³⁶ Raymond Chandler, 'Introduction' to *Pearls are a Nuisance* (London: Penguin, 1964), p.8.

³⁷ 'non ho la stoffa del protagonista', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.33; p.32.

observed, this is hardly a campus novel.³⁸ We are still left with the puzzle of Casaubon's identification with Sam Spade.

It is only when we re-read the work of Dashiell Hammett in the light of *Foucault's Pendulum* that the parallels between the two emerge. Hammett's detectives, unlike Chandler's moral but unintellectual protagonists, spend most of their time talking. In *The Maltese Falcon* Sam Spade does not track down the criminals as one would expect. They contact him, and the conclusion of the novel has them all arrive at his apartment, spinning their various stories, and lying in order to improve their position according to Spade's slowly growing awareness of the central situation. It is Hammett's stories to which we can most meaningfully apply that cliché about detective stories: the image of the onion being peeled away layer by layer, as layer upon layer of deception is removed in pursuit of the truth. However, the model here is more complex, as it is interactionist. That is to say, the detective is involved intimately with the plot, in both senses of the word. Whereas the Golden Age detective story has the detective reconstructing a set of events in the past, much of the action in Hammett's fiction only occurs after the detective has become involved, and often occurs precisely because the detective has become involved. Hammett's version of the hard-boiled story therefore heightens the awareness of the detective as a figure involved with others, and subject to their perceptions as much as they are subject to his. It is no accident that the motive force for these stories is typically a romantic one between the detective and a client, who is rarely trustworthy, a trope exemplified by Spade's relationship with the treacherous Brigid O'Shaughnessy in *The Maltese Falcon*. Thus, if characters feel

³⁸ Norma Bouchard makes a case for considering *Foucault's Pendulum* as belonging to the same genre as the fiction of Malcolm Bradbury and David Lodge inasmuch as it is 'critifictional'; portraying academic life as a means of critically engaging with academic practice. See Norma Bouchard, 'Critifictional Epistemes in Contemporary Literature: The Case of *Foucault's Pendulum*', *Comparative Literature Studies* 32:4 (1995), 50-67. There is something in this, as both Lodge and Eco set themselves against the perceived excesses of deconstructionist practice through a form of *ad hominem* argument: deconstruction is personified in comically fallible deconstructionist critics. Furthermore, these characters are seen to be acting in ways familiar from Realist fiction, and which demonstrate their reliance on assumptions that they have allegedly rejected. The difference, however, is that Bradbury and Lodge are presenting characters aware of the post-structuralist debate that surrounds them, whereas Eco's Diabolicals are playing out a debate about which they know nothing.

that they are being identified as criminal, rightly or wrongly, they will typically spin a story or drop a hint to exonerate themselves, at the price of implicating someone else. It is Sam Spade's task to trace the patterns of lies and half-truths in order to reconstruct not simply the original mystery, but also the motivations and machinations of all those involved, including, but not restricted to, those who are criminally responsible.

Sam Spade's main tool for digging up the truth is therefore conversation. All he can rely upon is the discourse with which he is continuously presented. His skills are essentially twofold, and essentially predicated on his suspicion. First, he is able to distinguish, if not all the time, then at least frequently enough to make him appear remarkably perspicacious, between truth and lies. He is able to suspect that Brigid O'Shaughnessy is not telling him the truth by the fee she offers. 'I mean that you paid us more than if you'd been telling the truth', he later tells her, 'and enough more to make it all right'.³⁹ This is in some respects a subset of Spade's main skill, shared with all of Hammett's detectives, which is to see beyond what he is told, to focus on the intention there is in telling him it. Sam Spade works by analyzing conversations, phone calls, letters and notes. These are all deliberate acts of communication where an intention is assumed to exist for the act. The detective's skill is to distinguish the apparent intention from the real intention. Statements and signs offered for the examination of the detective become less important in terms of their indicative content, the information they purport to carry about the world, and correspondingly more important as indicators of the hidden intention of the utterer.

The solutions to Hammett's mysteries emerge only after the detective has pieced together what he has been told, and then successfully hypothesised a state of affairs that gives adequate explanations for why he has been told all the lies that he has been told. Spade eventually succeeds by postulating a complex conspiracy. It is, however, a very particular type of conspiracy, where every agent is acting purely on their own behalf, acting in concert only when it is to their immediate benefit, and sometimes not even realising that they are acting together.⁴⁰ In the conclusion of *The Maltese*

³⁹ *The Maltese Falcon*, p.33.

⁴⁰ This explanation of conspiratorial behaviour, with its combination of paranoia and cynical pragmatics, is best identified by the governing metaphor employed by a more recent crime writer, Michael Dibdin. Dibdin gives the first novel in his series

Falcon the protagonists -- Spade, Brigid, Gutman, Cairo, Wilmer -- negotiate their own positions within the overall project of selling the Falcon statue, not based on the truth but rather on which of them can be credibly and safely blamed for the earlier murders. In Hammett's world, the detective is right to operate in an essentially paranoid manner. He must always read ironically, seeking a sub-text, and never believing that he will be told something true for truth's sake.

In this respect, *The Maltese Falcon* in particular is an elegantly appropriate model for *Foucault's Pendulum* in its presentation of a world of discourse that is post-Saussurian in its recognition of the arbitrariness of signification. Sam Spade is a new type of detective, in that his laconic elusiveness is not in service of the construction of an aura of magic, as it was in Golden Age detectives, but rather because it is a primary level of self-defence in a world where every utterance is up for grabs. Spade's world, and his method of investigating that world, is 'all talk': both in that it is almost entirely constructed from discourse, and in that it is ultimately empty. The statue, the Maltese Falcon, for which at least three people have been murdered, turns out to be a fake. The violent, convoluted plans of the thieves and murderers in *The Maltese Falcon* were all committed in pursuit of a secret, a prize that was never there. Spade, manoeuvred into surrendering the statue to Gutman, only appears to have done well, because none of the participants had foreseen that the owner of the original statue had made a fake.⁴¹ The necessary information, the hypothesis that

featuring the Italian detective Aurelio Zen the title *Ratking* (London: Faber, 1988). A ratking is an unusual natural occurrence where rats in close confines get their tails knotted together (see Martin Hart, *Rats* (Chicago: Alison & Busby, 1982), pp.64-86). Dibdin uses the image to describe the operation of non-deliberate co-operation:

What we're dealing with is not a creature but a condition, the condition of being crucified to your fellows, squealing madly, biting, spitting, lashing out, yet somehow surviving, somehow even vilely flourishing! That's what makes the conspiracy so formidable. There's no need for agendas or strategies, for lists of members or passwords or secret codes. The ratking is self-regulating. It responds automatically and effectively to any threat.

-- *Ratking*, p.81.

⁴¹ We are told that the original statue was made by the Knights Hospitaller, placing the location of original value in the fourteenth century. The similarity of this pursuit of the secret treasure of the Crusaders to that developed in *Foucault's Pendulum* is irresistible. The history of the statue is given in Chapter Thirteen of *The*

escaped all participants, is that they could never come out on top, no matter how they jostled and manoeuvred. The statue is what Alfred Hitchcock would label a 'MacGuffin' -- the device that claimed to be the motive force for the whole plot, but which was, in itself arbitrary and meaningless; 'to steal plans or documents, or discover a secret, it doesn't matter what it is', Hitchcock told François Truffaut. '[...] The only thing that really matters is that in the picture the plans, documents, or secrets must seem to be of vital importance to the characters'.⁴² The detail of the MacGuffin is not required, its sole purpose being to provide narrative drive.⁴³

Foucault's Pendulum merely generalises the MacGuffin, offering a theory of it in modern culture. The absence of the statue in *The Maltese Falcon* becomes, in Eco's novel, the absence of any worthwhile secret. 'There is only an empty secret', Casaubon finally realises, 'a secret that keeps slipping through your fingers'.⁴⁴ Just as fictional detection so often resembles the process of academic criticism, with its abductive hypothesising on the basis of minute textual signs, so here Casaubon's comment may seem to apply to the critical readings so frequently imposed on *Foucault's Pendulum*. It is clear that some of them make Eco uncomfortable, but even he would agree with Culler that this is hardly a criterion for rejection. There can be a problem, however, when critics respond to the intertextual and referential

Maltese Falcon, in a dialogue between Spade and Gutman peppered with historical and historiographical references. This chapter, with its unusual mix of hard-boiled discourse and effortless historical narrative, would seem to be the model for most of the expository chapters in *Foucault's Pendulum*.

⁴² François Truffaut, *Hitchcock*, with the collaboration of Helen G. Scott (London: Secker & Warburg, 1968), p.138.

⁴³ One of the few critics to mention the MacGuffin in relation to Eco's fiction is Peter Bondanella. Curiously, Bondanella mentions it not in relation to *Foucault's Pendulum*, but as a description of the lost book of Aristotle in *The Name of the Rose*, which he labels the story's MacGuffin because it is 'the necessary mechanism around which the entire plot had revolved' (Bondanella, p.103). This rather misses the point, repeatedly made by Hitchcock, that MacGuffins are in themselves meaningless. 'To me, the narrator', Hitchcock says, 'they're of no importance whatsoever' (*Hitchcock*, p.138). Aristotle's treatise on comedy is relevant thematically and materially to the precise motivation of the characters in *The Name of the Rose*, and is therefore not a MacGuffin.

⁴⁴ 'C'è solo un segreto vuoto. Un segreto che slitta', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.492; p.620-1.

pressure of the novels with an assumption that they must perform the paranoid, abductive interpretations with which they are being teased. We can see what happens when a smart reader of Eco, Linda Hutcheon, feels the shadowy presence of Eco himself monitoring the critical community.⁴⁵ Noting the intertextual references to Hammett and the Indiana Jones films in *Foucault's Pendulum*, she makes an odd complaint: 'that these latter are overt in the novel itself makes this task [of locating intertexts] somewhat straightforward: again, Eco makes his critics feel secondary!'.⁴⁶ Given that Hutcheon is addressing irony in a novel which is about the foolishness of paranoid readers who insist on ignoring the obvious and reading for deep, hidden meanings, this is a rather risky approach.⁴⁷ She is concerned to read *Foucault's Pendulum* through Michel Foucault's *Les mots et les choses*, and it is the dismissal of detective fiction and other mass cultural references that appears to make

⁴⁵ Aside from writing *Reflections on The Name of the Rose* and *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, Eco has been a visible presence in the field of criticism of his own work. It is clear that he reads much of the criticism of his novels from the frequency and range of his comments on them. He tellingly labels an article on *Foucault's Pendulum* by Giosuè Musca as 'among the best I have read' (*Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p.83). More than this, Eco prefaced the edition of *Modern Language Notes* devoted to *Foucault's Pendulum* with his comments on the articles within, and offered corrections to Peter Bondanella's recent book. Bondanella reassures his readers that Eco kept to factual emendations, and refrained from comment on matters of interpretation. Nevertheless, there are few critics as clear-sighted and blunt as Guy P. Raffa, who notes that 'for someone who has repeatedly claimed not to want to speak about his own fiction and scholarly responses to it, Eco has surely not been silent on these matters', and worries that Eco's 'star' status may produce 'scholarship influenced by the sort of hero-worship exhibited by fans' (Guy P. Raffa, 'Walking and Swimming with Umberto Eco', *MLN* 113:1 (1998) 164-85, 169, 170).

⁴⁶ Linda Hutcheon, 'Irony-clad Foucault', in *Reading Eco*, pp.312-27. This essay is, in fact, a modified version of Hutcheon's discussion of *Foucault's Pendulum* in *Irony's Edge*, in which Eco's position was not at issue. As previously noted, Hutcheon wishes to develop a reading where Eco's novel is seen to be founded on a close parallelism with the work of Michel Foucault.

⁴⁷ The possibility that Hutcheon is herself being ironic is, unfortunately, small. In *Irony's Edge*, where she develops the reading of *Foucault's Pendulum* expressed in 'Irony-clad Foucault', she wisely makes her position clear in the introduction: 'I hasten to add: this is a book *about* irony, and not an ironic book' (*Irony's Edge*, p.7).

room for this.⁴⁸ Such a move, while it certainly produces an interesting interpretation, starts from the dangerous assumption that obvious meanings are uninteresting. In the terms of the debate between Eco and Jonathan Culler, on 'overinterpretation', this opens up the possibility of a position between their polemically adopted stances. We can agree with Culler that critics 'should apply as much interpretive pressure as they can, should carry their thinking as far as it can go'.⁴⁹ Simultaneously, however, we can recognise a certain justice in Eco's complaint about paranoid interpretation, interpretation that ignores obvious meanings in pursuit of fresh, interesting insights. If we choose to interpret Eco's call for interpretive moderation as a yearning not for restriction *per se*, but rather for balance, then it becomes possible to read *Foucault's Pendulum* both as an engagement with modern interpretation theory and as a relatively orthodox narrative of detection.

Such a double reading is, for critics such as Hutcheon, impossible. '*Foucault's Pendulum*', she says, 'despite its press, is not really an adventure story, a thriller, or a detective story'.⁵⁰ She goes on to place the novel in opposition to Michael Holquist's claim that the detective story is particularly meaningful to postmodernist fiction, at the same time claiming that *Foucault's Pendulum* takes to an ironic extreme the 'belief that the mind, given enough time, can understand everything'.⁵¹ My argument is that *Foucault's Pendulum* can be defined quite reasonably in terms of detective fiction precisely because, like much postmodernist fiction, it shares the concern that detective fiction and its descendants express over this very principle. Eco's novel, like his first, obsessively worries about the possibility of establishing an order in the interpreted world, and sees disorder in many paranoid visions of order. We have, in fact, already seen how this worry and this troublesome equivalence between order and chaos is expressed in detective fiction stretching back

⁴⁸ Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), translated as *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Pantheon, 1970).

⁴⁹ *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p.110.

⁵⁰ Hutcheon, 'Irony-clad Foucault', in *Reading Eco*, p.312.

⁵¹ Holquist, p.141.

past Borges to Christie, Chesterton, Conan Doyle and Poe. We can now start to examine how this same concern continues to take shape in detective-based fiction through the middle and later parts of the twentieth century, and how this is a tradition to which *Foucault's Pendulum* can be said legitimately to belong.

The Spy Narrative: The End Justifies the Means

As we will see, the obsession with the transaction between order and chaos reaches a mystical-philosophical apotheosis in works such as the anarcho-paranoid mystery saga *The Illuminatus! Trilogy*.⁵² This self-proclaimed underground classic mixes American counter-cultural libertarianism with mid-seventies high conspiracy fever, with a loose thread of reference to the historical Bavarian Illuminati founded by Adam Weishaupt in 1776. It features a bewildering, often poorly deployed cast, including a cheaply parodic James Bond-figure, 'Fission Chips, 00005'. *Illuminatus!* makes its anarchist argument in the context of an overall process of continual movement between what it labels (with perhaps a self-ironising acknowledgement of the standard definition of eristics as sophistry) the eristic and aneristic principles:

Hang on for some metaphysics. The Aneristic principle is that or ORDER, the Eristic Principle is that of DISORDER. On the surface, the Universe seems (to the ignorant) to be ordered; this is the ANERISTIC ILLUSION. [...] But on closer examination, order dissolves into disorder, which is the ERISTIC ILLUSION.⁵³

The greatest pertinence of this ironically anarchistic stance for *Foucault's Pendulum* is that it embraces the troublesomeness of the conflict between order and disorder in post-classical detective fiction, acknowledging that it is the drive to discover order, the 'Aneristic Principle', that it at the base of the modern adaptations of the detective story. These same balanced drives to order and to chaos are provided

⁵² Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson, *The Illuminatus! Trilogy* (New York: Dell, 1975). The trilogy consists of *The Eye in the Pyramid*, *The Golden Apple*, and *Leviathan*. The books form a continuous narrative and are published together, and will be referred to in the text as *Illuminatus!*.

⁵³ *Illuminatus!*, p.58.

with a topically generated outlet in the form of the spy story. Elements of disguise, infiltration and spying can be seen in many types of literature, such as revenge tragedy. Nevertheless, the genre comes into its own with narratives based on 'The Great Game' of pre-Great War Europe, with Erskine Childers' *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903) inspired by the author's concerns about a possible German invasion of Britain.⁵⁴ John Buchan's *The Thirty-Nine Steps* traces an imaginary account of the start of the Great War, and the further wartime adventures of Buchan's hero, Richard Hannay, almost exclusively involve him in spying for his country.⁵⁵ The increased professionalisation of espionage in the Cold War era encouraged the production of a substantial sub-literature of spy stories, ranging from the sadistic 'pulp' fantasies of Ian Fleming to the more realist novels of John le Carré, where issues of ideology and betrayal intrude into the shabby everyday work of information gathering. The spy is even more transgressive than the hard-boiled detective, embodying the Machiavellian principle, historically associated with the Jesuits, that the end justifies the means. This is a principle also heavily linked with conspiracy fiction. In *Illuminatus!* we are told that it is one that Adam Weishaupt, founder of the Bavarian Illuminati, 'acquired from his Jesuit youth'.⁵⁶ The Editors in *Foucault's Pendulum*, with a piece of literary criticism good enough for Eco to employ almost verbatim in one of his Norton lectures, locate the principle in both Eugène Sue's *Le Juif errant* (attributed to the Jesuits), and in the notorious, fake, *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (attributed to the purported Jewish world conspiracy described in the document).⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Erskine Childers, *The Riddle of the Sands* (London: Smith, Elder, 1903). Belbo, who is, out of the three editors, the most aware of his literary antecedents, borrows the term 'the Great Game' ('il Grande Gioco'), first employed in Kipling's *Kim*, to describe the Templar/Rosicrucian plan in his secret attempts at fictional. See *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.392; p.499.

⁵⁵ John Buchan, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1915); *Greenmantle* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916); *Mr Standfast* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919); *The Three Hostages* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1924); *The Island of Sheep* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1936); published together as *The Complete Richard Hannay* (London: Penguin, 1992).

⁵⁶ *Illuminatus!*, p.103.

⁵⁷ *Foucault's Pendulum*, pp.380-2; pp.484-7. Eco unravels of the history of the *Protocols* in 'Fictional Protocols', Chapter Six in *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*, pp.117-140. Eco's survey adds to the sources identified in the standard reference on

Eco traces the ideas presented in the *Protocols*, beginning as outright fiction in scenes from Alexandre Dumas' *Joseph Balsamo* (1849), Sue's novel, then *Biarritz* by 'Sir John Retcliffe' [Hermann Goedsche], and various pamphlets based on these works. The gradually increasing seriousness with which the ideas were received, culminating in their publication as genuine by the Russian Sergei Nilus, provides both the best model for the destiny of the Plan in *Foucault's Pendulum*, and the strongest defence for Eco's novel as politically or historically worthwhile. It is inevitable that the culminating version of the Plan incorporates the *Protocols*, indicating the horrific possibilities that have lain at the end of the conspiratorial train of thought.

The anti-semitism fuelled by the *Protocols* reached its depths in the first half of the century with the Holocaust, the murder of millions of Jews in German concentration camps under the Third Reich. After this point, with the exception of numerically small right-wing and racist propagandists, the notion of a Jewish conspiracy noticeably receded from view. However, the association of the principle of 'the end justifies the means' with various conspiracies, fictional or allegedly real, continued in other areas, most of all in the growing literature of espionage that emerged after the Second World War. The centrality of this principle in the moral order presented by spy fiction can be perceived when Eco performs a semiotic analysis of the quintessential fictional spy -- Ian Fleming's James Bond. Eco places particular emphasis on Bond's only moment of moral crisis, in the first novel, *Casino Royale*:

The difference between good and evil -- is it really something neat, recognizable, as the hagiography of counterespionage would like us to believe? At this point Bond is ripe for the crisis, for the salutary recognition of universal ambiguity, and he sets off along the route traversed by the protagonist of *le Carré*.⁵⁸

the *Protocols*, Norman Cohn's *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967).

⁵⁸ Umberto Eco, 'Narrative Structures in Fleming', Chapter Six in *The Role of the Reader*, pp.144-74, p.145.

Bond goes no further than this, satisfied by a consoling speech from a French compatriot, and hardened against the intrusion of moral doubts throughout the rest of the series. Hence the paranoid consequences of 'the end justifies the means' are barely considered in the fantasy of political espionage that is presented in Fleming's novels, reflecting perhaps political and moral divides that appeared more certain through the nineteen fifties and into the early sixties. The more morally ambiguous atmosphere that developed in Western perceptions of the Cold War through the sixties and seventies suited the less glamorous spy narratives of John le Carré, following on from Graham Greene's espionage 'entertainments'. The consequence of following the operating procedures of le Carré's 'Circus' (i.e. the secret services) is that frequently one's own side must be misinformed or sacrificed -- 'hung out to dry' -- in pursuit of a greater result. A great part of the deeply felt ambiguity of the world of le Carré's spies is hence the impossibility of determining with inadequate information whether one's masters are betraying one, and if so, which side is the ultimate beneficiary. Just as the distinction between detective and criminal, which was always a permeable one in the detective genre, almost disappears in the spy story, so this is increasingly accompanied by an elision of order and chaos.

Foucault's Pendulum makes a great effort to persuade the reader that it is operating on the margins, at least, of the spy genre, through an employment of both intertextual reference and more general tropological quotation. The opening two sections of the novel, set immediately before and after the dramatic climax, offer the reader a guarantee that there will be a grand *finalé*, diverting any initial suspicion that the conspiracy may be only imaginary. At the same time, the reader is offered a teasing suggestion that the novel will ultimately fulfil the expectations of the conspiracy thriller with a glimpse of the final image of Casaubon, on the hill, awaiting the arrival of his enemies. Here Eco is quoting adventure stories such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Pavilion on the Links*, but also encouraging the reader to bring in cinematic references, such as Howard Hawks' classic Western *Rio Bravo* (1959), which has a wandering cowboy and a drunkard sheriff hold out against bandits in a tiny jail-house.⁹⁹ 'From time to time I step onto the terrace, to see if

⁹⁹ Robert Louis Stevenson, 'The Pavilion on the Links', in *New Arabian Nights, The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson* with bibliographical notes by Edmund Gosse, 20 vols (London: Cassell, 1906), IV, pp.184-248. Stevenson's story seems a

anyone is coming up the hill', says Casaubon, 'I feel that I'm in a movie. How pathetic! "Here come the bad guys...."'.⁶⁰

Similarly, the description of Pilade's bar, where Casaubon meets Belbo, and where he experiences the disappointments of political activism, calls upon sources promising adventure from the wartime double-dealing of *Casablanca* (1942) to *Star Wars* (1977).⁶¹ There are other features common to the spy story that are also taken up in *Foucault's Pendulum*, such as travel to exotic locations. The placement of the dramatic climax of the story in the public space of the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers in Paris is a Flemingesque touch, and Casaubon's attendance at a syncretic voodoo ritual probably reminds most readers who have not seen the rituals first hand of the exotic presentation of voodoo in Bond's adventure, *Live and Let Die*. Alongside these resemblances there is the cliché of Belbo's frantic, interrupted phone call that kick-starts the main portion of the novel and sends Casaubon chasing to Paris (*Keter*, the first section of the novel, concerns Casaubon hiding in the Conservatoire on the night of the showdown, and we are sent back two days at the start of section two, *Hokhmah*, to hear the phone call). The end of the phone call effectively and efficiently signals jeopardy, conspiracy, mystery and adventure to follow:

Udii dei rumori, la voce di Belbo di avvicinava e si allontanava con intensità variabile, come se qualcuno cercasse di strappargli il microfono.

"Belbo! Cosa succede?"

"Mi hanno trovato, la parola..."

particularly apposite reference, particularly as the villains that close in on the pavilion through the story are Italian. This would give an amusing and appropriate *frisson* between protagonist and antagonist for an Italian reader.

⁶⁰ 'Ogni tanto vado in terrazzo, per controllare se qualcuno si avvicini salendo la collina. Mi sembra di essere in un film, che pena: "Essi stanno venendo..."', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.42; p.44.

⁶¹ Casaubon makes the link to *Casablanca* in order to emphasise how, after 1968, the divisions between establishment and anti-establishment (order and disorder) became compromised, this being exemplified by how agents of the two would happily mix together in Pilade's, in the same way that German occupiers and the occupied mix together at Rick's in the film: 'In '68 and in the years that followed, Pilade's became a kind of Rick's Café' ('Verso il settantotto, e negli anni seguenti, Pilade era divenuto un Rick's Bar'), *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.50; p.54.

Un colpo secco, come uno sparo. Doveva essere il microfono che era caduto e aveva battuto contro il muro, o contro quelle tavolette che ci sono sotto il telefono. Un tramestio. Poi il clic del microfono riappeso. Non certo da Belbo.

I heard noises. Belbo's voice came closer, moved away, as if someone was wresting the receiver from him.

'Belbo! What's going on?'

'They found me. The word—'

A sharp report, like a shot. It must have been the receiver falling, slamming against the wall or onto that little shelf they have under telephones. A scuffle. Then the click of the receiver being hung up. Certainly not by Belbo.⁶²

Even within this highly coded thriller sequence there is room for Eco to open up the issue of the silencing of Belbo in a teasing way. First, obviously, the slamming of the receiver is a metaphor of Belbo's violent death. It is an ambiguous sign, a noise transmitted through a telephone wire, that suggests the worst, most paranoid, of possible events to Casaubon. His instant self-correction, from shot to scuffle, indicates that Casaubon's mind is still working healthily, as he realises that the sound could also be an artefact of telephone communication itself, a signal produced by the system rather than by its user. Second, Belbo's struggle to tell Casaubon the word - - presumably the password to the computer -- gives the contents of the computer an assumed importance. This is part of the narrative construction giving us reason to believe that there is a genuine mystery to be discovered. Third, the silencing of Belbo by the Diabolicals ironically prefigures his final silence on the solution to the Plan. Fourth, there is a double-bluff encoded in this sequence for the reader aware from *The Name of the Rose* or elsewhere that Eco is a careful reader of Borges. 'Death and the Compass', the Borges story so important to Eco's first novel, employs this same cliché as a part of the plot to deceive the detective Lönnrot. In that story, the criminal Red Scharlach impersonates an informer, telephones from a bar claiming to have information, then fakes his own kidnapping.⁶³ Eco, already playing with the reader's willingness to think in a paranoid fashion, here punishes

⁶² *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.26; p.22.

⁶³ See *Labyrinths*, p.110, p.116.

the reader seeking intertextual references. There is less here than meets the eye, rather than the excess of meaning we desire and anticipate.

Of course, double-play, trickery and misdirection are quite proper to the spy story. They come out most forcefully in the sequence in *Foucault's Pendulum* where Belbo is persuaded by Agliè to carry a suitcase with him on the train, which he is told contains rare books for a client in Florence. Belbo is to leave the suitcase on the train when he leaves at Bologna, for it to be collected by the client when it stops in Florence. The seriousness of the situation is only realised by Belbo when he sees the news later the same evening, and discovers that there is a police search for the 'terrorist' who left a bomb in a suitcase on the train to Florence. The reader is hardly surprised when Belbo then receives an anonymous threatening phone call, again a cliché of the espionage genre, from a man with a suitably 'strange foreign voice, a slightly Balkan accent, mellifluous', threatening 'how awful it would be if someone were to inform the police that Signor Belbo was the unidentified occupant of seat number 45'.⁶⁴

What is not fully apparent on a first reading is that this blackmail gambit is the initiation of the conspiracy as the active entity that its members assume it already is. Mapping the novel as a spy story, and placing the first two parts of the novel in their correct chronological place after Belbo has been blackmailed into travelling to Paris, from where he calls Casaubon, we find that the mysterious adversary of the story only does anything whatsoever three-quarters of the way through the narrative. The suitcase bomb is the first and only unequivocal evidence in the novel of a group of people acting in concert according to a secret agenda. In becoming an active agent, the conspiracy chooses to express itself in the manner of a spy thriller. Naturally, the association also works in reverse. The spy thriller selects as its central device the conspiracy, presenting to its reader the fantasy of a world organized according to a paranoid vision. It is this tradition, and this narrative desire, to which we must next turn.

⁶⁴ 'Una voce sconosciuta, straniera, con un accento vagamente balcanico', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.438; p.557. 'Sarebbe stato un bel guaio se qualcuno avesse segnalato alla polizia che il signor Belbo era lo sconosciuto del posto 45', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.439; p.557.

We have seen how the hard-boiled detective stories of Hammett place the investigating figure into the centre of the world under suspicion. The interactionist properties of Hammett's narratives ensure that the detective, like the paranoid individual in other circumstances, is the fixed point around which a world of discourse revolves. This tendency is exacerbated in the later spy story, such as that of John le Carré, where even one's own side, following its own logic of self-preservation, may lie and double-cross. The spy and the detective alike then come to stand effectively alone, infinitely suspicious of a world in which little is as it seems. This position, once opened up, has offered many serious writers a playful realm of narrative possibility. As we will see, this play often takes the form of an elision of the detective figure with the criminal.

One of the earliest writers to engage with the spy narrative in this manner was Graham Greene. His stories combined a mastery of the generic requirements of the spy narrative with a sensitivity to the subdivisions and secret connections generated by the Cold War. The city had long been associated with secret movement, the uncanny and the paranoid, a tradition extending from the hidden doors in Parisian walls of Hoffmann's *Mademoiselle de Scudery*, via Poe's Parisian mysteries and Baudelaire's 'Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves' ('Swarming city, city full of dreams') to Dostoyevsky's urban underground and Kafka's nightmare cityscapes.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ E.T.A. Hoffmann, 'Das Fräulein von Scuderi' (1818), translated by Sally Hayward as 'Mademoiselle de Scudery', in *Tales of Hoffmann*, selected by R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1982); Charles Baudelaire, 'Les sept vieillards', in *The Complete Verse*, edited and translated by Francis Scarfe, 2 vols. (London: Anvil, 1986), I, p.177. Baudelaire's poem describes a case of multiple doppelgängerism, which T.S. Eliot matches with the uncanny 'third who walks always beside you' (T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* (London: Hogarth, 1923), 1.359). Eco is well aware of the uncanny qualities of the city, demonstrated when he adapts Freud's misadventures in urban geography, as described in 'The Uncanny' (Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny', in *Art and Literature*, edited by Albert Dicksen (London: Penguin, 1985), p.359), to his parodic anthropological report on Milan, 'Industry and Sexual Repression in a Po Valley Society', in *Misreadings*, pp.69-93. Freud's disturbing inadvertent returns to the same city street (which Roberto Calasso saw as so suggestive of modern urban paranoia) become, in Eco, the absurd inability to reach the Porta Ludovico. Eco's Melanesian anthropologist concludes that 'Milanese space stretches and contracts like a rubber band, and its contractions are influenced by the movements the subject makes in it, so that it is impossible for him to take

The Second World War and its aftermath, with the divided cities of Berlin and Vienna that had to be traversed secretly, reinforced both the sense of paranoia and its link with the urban underground. In Greene's story, *The Third Man*, famously filmed in 1949 by Carol Reed in a Vienna constructed from shadows, the profiteer Harry Lime travels from sector to sector through the city's sewer networks, a device which Greene claimed was based on actual circumstance.⁶⁶

Foucault's Pendulum employs the specifically urban nature of this association of the secret and the subterranean with its speculations on hidden tunnels under Paris and in the final association of the Plan with telluric, underground currents of energy. As we will see, this paranoia reaches its best-known expression in the fiction of Thomas Pynchon. Greene, however, goes on to produce, with *Our Man in Havana*, a casually despairing portrait of the paranoia characterising the Cold War situation.⁶⁷ Like other Greene narratives of emptiness and bathos, *Our Man in Havana* is on one level a comedy of errors, following the employment of a lowly vacuum-cleaner salesman, Wormold, as an agent for MI6. Wormold starts to claim funds for imaginary sources, but, unable to locate any confidential information in Havana, he is forced to invent information in order to justify his claims. As his initial reports are accepted, Wormold begins to feel some of the joy of creativity, and his inventions become more grand, and hence of more concern to British Intelligence. 'What was the good of playing a game with half a heart?', he tells himself. 'At least let him give them something they would enjoy for their money, something to put on their files better than an economic report'.⁶⁸ The distance between his reports and the Plan of the Editors in Eco's novel is small. Wormold's *pièce de résistance* is his

them into account as he proceeds' (*Misreadings*, p.85).

⁶⁶ There were no Allied zones in the sewers, the entrances were dotted throughout the city disguised as advertisement kiosks, and for some inexplicable reason the Russians refused to allow them to be locked. Agents could pass uncontrolled from any zone to another.

-- Graham Greene, *Ways of Escape* (London: Penguin, 1980), p.99.

⁶⁷ Graham Greene, *Our Man in Havana* (London: Penguin, 1971). The story was filmed from a script by Greene by Carol Reed in 1959.

⁶⁸ *Our Man in Havana*, p.72.

diagram of a mysterious weapon being constructed in the hills, which he bases on the internal workings of one of his vacuum-cleaners. It makes sense to understand Belbo's Hermetic reading of the construction of a motor car as an echo of Wormold's deliberate partaking of the paranoid view, where every banal conversation can be a confidential report, every domestic machine can become a secret weapon.⁶⁹

Beyond this similarity, Greene's novel displays within its downbeat world a distinctly Borgesian fear that reality will be supplanted by the fantastic. Wormold, worried that his material is being taken too seriously, 'kills off' one of his agents, the pilot Raul, only to find that a young man named Raul has died on the way to the airport. Wormold's secretary tries to understand the behaviour of the enemy agents in terms of the type of fiction upon which they are modelling themselves, arguing that 'the world is modelled after the popular magazines nowadays'.⁷⁰ Even the opposition start to believe that Wormold has secret information, despite his protestations. 'They knew about you from the beginning, Mr Wormold', says his opposite number, Dr Hasselbacher,

but they didn't take you seriously. They even thought you might be inventing your reports. But then you changed your codes and your staff increased. The British Secret Service would not be so easily deceived as all that, would it?⁷¹

This awful, paranoid logic is formally identical to that displayed by the Diabolicals in *Foucault's Pendulum*. Here, as in Eco's novel, a piece of fiction proves intransigent, unfalsifiable, and therefore gains the power to overwhelm the merely contingent truths of the real world. This is a pattern that we can trace to the logic of claims of Rosicrucian invisibility, in a classic paranoid double-bind. Any possible correction or objection can be met with the response: 'but that's what they

⁶⁹ Belbo, exploring the paranoid consequences of the Plan, reads the automobile as the Tree of the Sefirot, imagining that it 'existed only to serve as metaphor of creation' ('esistesse solo come metafora della creazione'), *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.300; p.378.

⁷⁰ *Our Man in Havana*, p.118.

⁷¹ *Our Man in Havana*, p.142.

want us to think'. In terms of fiction, we can trace the overwhelming of reality by fantasy at least as far as Borges' 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius'.⁷² In this story, a volume of an Encyclopaedia describing a new and impossible world is found. It is an enterprise that must be 'the work of a secret society of astronomers, biologists, engineers, metaphysicians, poets, chemists, algebraists, moralists, painters, geometers... directed by an obscure man of genius'.⁷³ Later, these suspicions are confirmed, with the project's origins being in the early seventeenth century, with an emphasis on 'hermetic studies', philanthropy and the cabala'.⁷⁴

This suggestion of Rosicrucianism is backed by a couple of references to Johann Valentin Andreae, 'who, in the early seventeenth century, described the imaginary community of Rosae Crucis -- a community that others founded later, in imitation of what he had prefigured'.⁷⁵ Borges' story is a literalising speculation based on the seriousness with which the Rosicrucian publications were received. His Tlön supplants the real world. 'How could one do other than submit to Tlön', he asks, 'to the minute and vast evidence of an orderly planet?'⁷⁶ Tlön is a paranoid world, where everything has meaning, where everything shows the evidence of design. 'Tlön is surely a labyrinth', he concludes, 'but it is a labyrinth devised by men, a labyrinth destined to be deciphered by men'.⁷⁷ *Foucault's Pendulum* shares not only Borges' historical interest in the Rosicrucian phenomenon, but shares the desire to treat it as a moral fable. In the terms in which Borges chose to describe it, the natural will always succumb to the glamour of the magical. The magical, here, equates to paranoid fiction, as in the novel of detection, 'where every detail is an omen and a cause'.⁷⁸ This leads to a more generalised concern about the vulnerability of conscientious descriptions of the world to glamorous, powerful, but

⁷² Jorge Luis Borges, 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius', in *Labyrinths*, pp.27-43.

⁷³ *Labyrinths*, p.32.

⁷⁴ *Labyrinths*, p.39.

⁷⁵ *Labyrinths*, p.29.

⁷⁶ *Labyrinths*, p.42.

⁷⁷ *Labyrinths*, p.42.

⁷⁸ Jorge Luis Borges, *Obras Completas 1923-1972*, p.232, my translation.

ultimately empty grand narratives. Borges' narrator complains that 'any symmetry with a semblance of order -- dialectical materialism, anti-Semitism, Nazism -- was sufficient to entrance the minds of men'.⁷⁹ Again, we find the political justification offered by Borges being matched in Eco's investigation into Hermetic semiosis, with its basis in uncovering the anti-semitic desire for the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to be true.

This condemnation of the potentially fantastic results of totalising systems is also to be found in the work of Vladimir Nabokov. This is best seen in *The Eye*, a tale of detection in which the narrator, a frustrated lover, seeks the identity of an apparent rival, Smurov.⁸⁰ Nabokov reserves particular bile for the communist ideas that resulted in his exile, with his narrator sneering:

It is silly to seek a basic law, even sillier to find it. Some mean-spirited little man decides that the whole course of humanity can be explained in terms of insidiously revolving signs of the zodiac or as the struggle between an empty and a stuffed belly [...] Luckily no such laws exist: a toothache will cost a battle, a drizzle cancel an insurrection. Everything is fluid, everything depends on chance, and all in vain were the efforts of that crabbed bourgeois in Victorian checkered trousers, author of *Das Kapital*, the fruit of insomnia and migraine.⁸¹

The revelation at the end, feeding from the formal twists of the Golden Age detective story, is that Smurov is himself the narrator. This play with identity, the final conflation of detective with the criminal (to be found also in genre works such as Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*) is a recurrent theme in Nabokov's work. It dominates *Pale Fire*, a self-regarding game of a novel that is an academically-based murder mystery requiring the involvement of the reader as detective.⁸² The paranoid Kinbote is left to edit the last work of the poet John

⁷⁹ *Labyrinths*, p.42.

⁸⁰ Vladimir Nabokov, *The Eye*, translated by the author and Dmitri Nabokov (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), edition cited (London: Penguin, 1992).

⁸¹ *The Eye*, pp.36-7.

⁸² Vladimir Nabokov, *Pale Fire* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962), edition cited with an introductory essay by Mary McCarthy (London: Penguin,

Shade, 'Pale Fire', in which he spuriously attempts to make the text yield a series of references to his fantasy life, as exiled King of Zembla.⁴³ The novel is more than just a typically Nabokovian blast at the stupidity of critics. It is an exploration of the perils and pleasures of overinterpretation that asks the reader to become actively involved in the game, reading off the poem against the foreword, the commentary and even the index to produce, much as Kinbote does, the submerged plot of the novel. Of course, Nabokov is not merely highlighting the essentially paranoid character of textual criticism, especially when it is keen to show the hidden story of authorial autobiography behind the fictional construct of the text. He is also showing the paranoid expectations of reading any form of narrative. Not only do we typically expect a narrative to cohere, we also expect it, like the encyclopaediae of Tlön, to 'tell a world' that may be, at first, resistant to our comprehension. It is this expectation that *Foucault's Pendulum* also reflects, though in a less self-conscious fashion. Nabokov's fictional realms tease us with the prospect of intelligibility, of the capability of being resolved into coherent worlds, while always seeming to maintain an unbridgeable distance from the real.

This same mode of teasing is employed, with less success, in John Fowles' early novel, *The Magus*.⁴⁴ Here, the paranoid tendency in reading is given full reign as the self-absorbed narrator, Nicholas Urfe, finds himself in the centre of an elaborately staged game of deceptions. These are organised on a Greek island by the gentlemanly, mystical, Maurice Conchis, who evidently owes something to the notorious self-proclaimed magician, Aleister Crowley. In turn, Conchis joins Crowley and the Comte de Saint-Germain as models for *Foucault's Pendulum's* urbanely deceitful Agliè, particularly in his manner of hiding behind infinitely regressive ironies. The narrative constantly suggests the detective genre, with Urfe investigating the mysterious performances to which he is subject in order to ascertain

1991).

⁴³ Of course, with the narration under the control of Kinbote himself, it is difficult to judge where the 'reality' of the novel lies with absolute certainty. Although the most normative reading has Kinbote's previous incarnation as the King of Zembla as fantasy, there is no means of finally selecting between the various interpretations on offer.

⁴⁴ John Fowles, *The Magus* (London: Cape, 1966).

the plan behind them. We might see parallels to *Foucault's Pendulum's* pastoral, regretful, coda in the final scene of Fowles' novel, where the narrator finally rejects the woman with whom he has become embroiled, because he suspects that he is still subject to the machinations of his deceivers. He is wrong, as he realises when he looks around him, to see the very English, homely details of Regent's Park. 'The theatre was empty', he realises. 'It was not a theatre'.⁸⁵ Urfe's mistake, however, is understandable given the intensely paranoid world that Fowles has conjured in order to construct his allegory, and this final twist does little to free the reader from the solipsistic force of the novel as a whole. This is an indication of the danger that *Foucault's Pendulum* also faces: that its plea for moderation, for reasonableness, cannot be made through the absence of moderation. Eco's novel, as we will see, places a great deal of pressure on one or two scenes of moderate interpretation.

Fowles' novel stands on the cusp of a divergence in modern fictions of paranoia, simultaneously arguing against paranoid solipsism and becoming engulfed by it. At the same time as Fowles was publishing *The Magus*, Thomas Pynchon was setting out urban paranoid landscapes from which there was not expected to be any exit. In Pynchon's work, as Salman Rushdie puts it, 'paranoia runs high, because behind the heavy scenes and bad trips and karmic Adjustments move the shadowy invisible forces, the true Masters of the Universe.'⁸⁶

Pynchon's fiction is frequently, but misleadingly, compared with *Foucault's Pendulum* precisely because of its concentration on paranoia and conspiracy in many forms. *Gravity's Rainbow* focuses on the collaboration between American and German industries as the Second World War drew to a close.⁸⁷ The much later *Vineland* has at its centre the suppression of a student uprising on a Californian campus in the late nineteen sixties.⁸⁸ This bears obvious political similarities to the place of the 1968 student uprising in *Foucault's Pendulum*. The difference lies in the relationship of paranoia to the revolutionary moment. In *Vineland* the secessionist

⁸⁵ *The Magus*, p.617.

⁸⁶ Salman Rushdie, 'Thomas Pynchon', in *Imaginary Homelands*, pp.352-7, p.352.

⁸⁷ Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow* (New York: Vintage, 1973).

⁸⁸ Thomas Pynchon, *Vineland* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1990).

'People's Republic of Rock and Roll' is comically undermined by the infighting and distrust engineered by FBI agent Brock Vond (whose name is clearly intended to echo James Bond), enabling the state to reassert its dominance. In *Foucault's Pendulum*, as we saw in Chapter One, paranoia and New Age beliefs are the result, not the cause, of the disillusionment and dissolution of revolutionary energy.

The difference in cultural situation may account for the difference in approach. Pynchon, writing of the USA's great time of social and political protest, is describing movements that appeared to be undermined by conspiracy (from secret CIA drug programmes and the assassination of Martin Luther King to the Watergate affair) before they could have a chance to become disillusioned. Pynchon's USA is a country where paranoia is a normal state of affairs. He populates this country with a broad selection of myths and rumours, such as the urban myth of albino alligators living in sewers used in his first novel, *V*.⁸⁹ *Vineland's* narrative is littered with fantastic stories of Godzilla-like monsters, ninja death touches and 'Thanatoids' -- the unquiet dead seeking karmic redress for wrongs suffered while alive. Pynchon's novels therefore ask the reader to accept as real, for the purposes of fiction, elements that are clearly not true in the real world. For all the madness and dubious knowledge that it describes, *Foucault's Pendulum* never approaches Pynchon's hallucinatory tone. The epigraphs from occult, mystical, cabbalistic and conspiracy-hunting books that head each chapter serve as a reminder that the novel essentially obeys the rules it lays down for the formation of the Plan itself -- except in very few cases, the Diabolical theories and information are derived from published material, and are not the product of Eco's imagination. This is, of course, a constraint on the extent to which Eco's novel can simply play, but it also gives it a certain edge on Pynchon's more free-wheeling allegories.

The tolerance for the unreal or surreal acquired by the Pynchon reader makes the relationship to the motif of conspiracy in his novels somewhat problematic. The conspiracies are suitably shadowy and deceptive, but no matter how politically serious, they are too tainted with the ridiculous to be sinister, being associated by juxtaposition with the comic (or even comic-book) events and characters around them. The only Pynchonian conspiracy that conjures up a sense of paranoia in its

⁸⁹ Thomas Pynchon, *V., a Novel* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1963).

reader is, paradoxically, his most tangential and curious one, the 'Trystero' secret postal service in *The Crying of Lot 49*.⁹⁰ This short novel assumes an awareness of the Los Angeles-based detective fictions of Raymond Chandler. The difference is that here, the protagonist, Oedipa Maas, slowly uncovers not the criminal substructure of everyday life in California, but what appears to be a centuries-old struggle, fought out first in Renaissance Europe, then in the nascent USA, over postal monopolies.⁹¹

For Oedipa, the referent of the mysterious word 'Trystero' is sought in the same way that the Diabolicals in *Foucault's Pendulum* seek the secret, and it proves similarly elusive. In addition, in both works hidden meaning is associated with one-to-one correspondence, an absence of arbitrariness in its reference. This is most clearly demonstrated when Oedipa considers both her increasing ability to spot the signs of the postulated conspiracy, and her inability to penetrate it:

She could, at this stage of things, recognize signals like that, as the epileptic is said to -- an odour, colour, pure piercing grace note sounding his seizure. Afterwards it is only this signal, really dross, this secular announcement, and never what is revealed during the attack, that he remembers. Oedipa wondered whether, at the end of this (if it were supposed to end), she too might not be left with only compiled memories of clues, announcements, intimations, but never the central truth itself.⁹²

Later, wandering through the streets of San Francisco at night, Oedipa sees symbols and references to Trystero almost everywhere around her like clues to a crime, the nature of which is not clear to her. At this point, the idea of the signal of epilepsy returns with a more definite lapsarian consequence:

⁹⁰ Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49* (New York: Bantam, 1966), edition cited (London: Cape, 1967).

⁹¹ Concern over postal monopolies is perhaps not as curious a concern for an American audience as it may seem to outsiders, given the historical and political association of the postal service in the USA with the idea of central government. 'Mail fraud' is a crime treated with a seriousness in the USA that would surprise most Europeans.

⁹² *The Crying of Lot 49*, p.66.

But then she wondered if the gemlike 'clues' were only some kind of compensation. To make up for her having lost the direct, epileptic Word, the cry that might abolish the night.⁹³

Pynchon's work, therefore, stands alongside *Foucault's Pendulum* in its proposal that the paranoid view is essentially seeking to retrieve a Cratylitic or Edenic perfection of reference, a suspension of Derridean *différance*. Salman Rushdie goes further in consciously placing both in a modern tradition of conspiracy fiction 'full of volumes with titles like *Illuminatus*'.⁹⁴ Rushdie's complaint is that while Pynchon has been able to 'transmute the base metal of the illuminatus-novel into art' by approaching it as witty political metaphor, Eco fails to provide characterisation and humour, substituting instead cheap irony.⁹⁵ This ignores Eco's somewhat academic sense of humour and the pastoral interludes offered by Belbo's reminiscences, but it is accurate in locating the 'illuminatus-novel' as a major point of reference.

The most important of these 'illuminatus-novels' is *The Illuminatus! Trilogy*, mentioned at the start of the previous section. The first observation to make is that it, too, is at least in part a satire on conspiracy writing and paranoid thought. *Foucault's Pendulum* cannot itself be satirising *Illuminatus!*, although it parallels it in some respects, including the division of both novels according to the ten stages of the Sefirot. Both, in their various ways, are playing with sincere Rosicrucian, Hermetic or paranoid books that claim to have uncovered the secret truth hidden behind the modern world. *Illuminatus!* takes a pair of scissors to the history books and to the outpourings of the paranoid and recombines them in a manner obviously inspired by William Burroughs.⁹⁶ There is, then, an intriguing similarity in the way that the authors of *Illuminatus!* and Eco adopt avant-gardist notions of cut-up,

⁹³ *The Crying of Lot 49*, p.81.

⁹⁴ Rushdie, p.269.

⁹⁵ Rushdie, p.269.

⁹⁶ Burroughs is presented in *Illuminatus!* as a perfectly sceptical, ironic figure, seen participating in a protest march. 'How, Joe wondered, can a man have courage without faith, without belief? Burroughs believed in nothing, and yet here he sat stubborn as Luther' (*Illuminatus!*, p.108). Burroughs is contrasted with Allen Ginsberg, who 'believed; he believed in everything' (*Illuminatus!*, p.108). Eco would see little difference between these two positions.

recombination and *bricolage* in texts that seek to preserve a recognisable narrative structure. The difference largely lies in their ultimate goal. While Eco appears to be arguing for a form of interpretive conservatism, a step back in time, the writers of *Illuminatus!*, Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson, have an agenda that shares some of the objectives of the Hermetic tradition. They mix a New Age credo of self-empowerment and self-transcendence with an ironic scepticism of what 'They' are telling 'us'. In some senses this is precisely the sort of compromise between Hermeticism and post-structuralist relativism to which Eco objects. *Illuminatus!* is a pseudo-avant-gardist *bricolage* of sources run together to create a text that seeks to occupy all available positions, simultaneously. The 'borrowings' do not match seamlessly, and their uncomfortably ill-fitting juxtapositions create literal effects of ironic meaning. Even when the pervasive ironies in *Illuminatus!* finally unwind to reveal a final position, this only serves to demonstrate how close the authors have come to a relativist version of the principle *adequatio rei et intellectus*. Throughout the novel the protagonists have been encouraged to profess belief in the 'Law of Fives' -- a principle that everything ultimately relates to the number five. In an appendix this is belatedly redefined to escape the determinism of paranoid thought, but still remaining within the overall framework of solipsistic relativism:

All phenomena are directly or indirectly related to the number five, and this relationship can always be demonstrated, *given enough ingenuity on the part of the demonstrator* [...] That's the very model of what a true scientific law must always be: a statement about how the human mind relates to the cosmos. We can never make a statement about the cosmos itself -- *but only about how our senses (or our instruments) detect it, and about how our codes and languages symbolize it*. That's the key to the Einstein-Heisenberg revolution in physics, and to the Buddha's revolution in psychology much earlier.⁹⁷

At this moment we see science, detection, post-structuralist relativism and Hermetic solipsism crossing each other to produce exactly what Eco identifies as Hermetic semiosis. 'And once one has decided to fish for similitudes, one can find them everywhere', he argues. 'Under certain descriptions, everything can be seen as

⁹⁷ *Illuminatus!*, p.742. Italics in original.

similar to everything else'.⁹⁸ This also brings us right back to Hammett's paranoid repositioning of the detective in the centre of the mystery. The temptation to elide detective and criminal in twentieth-century versions of the detective narrative derives from this centring process, whereby the activity of the detective becomes as important as that of the criminal. The involvement of the detective in the crime itself, so elegantly expressed in Hammett's stories, reflects one of the great themes of twentieth century thought about the process of interpretation -- that the interpreter is inextricably implicated in the object being interpreted. This idea is usually explained precisely by reference to the same insight underlying the conclusion of *Illuminatus!*: the uncertainty principle of Werner Heisenberg, which famously insisted on the determining effect of the observation itself on the results observed.⁹⁹ The comparable idea applicable to textual interpretation is the implication of the reader in the discourse being presented.¹⁰⁰ Partially because of its treatment of the world as book, and its resolute belief that causality can be determined through investigation of a Thomist rigour, the Golden Age detective story is a convenient allegory of the act of textual interpretation. With its narrative of constant conjectural, even paranoid, interpretation, it can stand for the objectivist orthodoxy that postmodernists so frequently wish to deny. However, once the detective story has been reconceived in the discourse-filled narrative worlds of Dashiell Hammett, the genre is open to recuperation precisely as a demonstration of the unavailability of an objective interpretation. The framework of the detective story, because it is so vulnerable in its dependence on the reliability of objective interpretation, becomes a favoured means of exploring the collapse of that reliability. The detective's

⁹⁸ *The Limits of Interpretation*, p.20.

⁹⁹ Werner Heisenberg, 'The uncertainty principle', translated by C. Eckart and F.C. Hoyt in *The Physical Principles of Quantum Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930). On the applicability of Heisenberg's work to non-quantum mechanical systems of interpretation see Cristopher Nash, *World Postmodern Fiction: A Guide* (Harlow: Longman, 1993), (originally published as *World-Games: The Tradition of Anti-Realist Revolt* (London: Methuen, 1987)), pp.37-8.

¹⁰⁰ Of course, the transposition of scientific theories into cultural or literary theory has recently been the subject of much debate. See Alan Sokal, 'A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies', *Lingua Franca* 6:4 (1996), 62-4, where he explains his parodic article published in the journal *Social Text*. See also Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont, *Intellectual Impostures* (London: Profile, 1998).

growing identification *with* (rather than *of*) the criminal in Borges and Nabokov mirrors the identification of the reader with the text being read. The increasing identification in *Foucault's Pendulum* of the Editors with the Diabolicals is just such a textual paranoia, in this case describing the creation of paranoid readers who, like Nabokov's Kinbote, ignore the 'moderate' interpretation in favour of one that equates the text with their preconceived ideas.

One of the questions to be asked of this appropriation of the detective form, recognisable in *Foucault's Pendulum's* Editors-turned-Diabolicals, concerns its generic status. Is it a parody of the detective story, or a development that remains within the overall scope of the genre? We have seen that Hutcheon considers *Foucault's Pendulum* to be not a detective fiction, and she is not alone. Brian McHale considers it 'an anti-detective novel', a definition that would, presumably, apply equally to the stories of Borges.¹⁰¹ The issue is of significance for the positioning of Eco's novels because it effectively decides whether we can read the texts as theoretical arguments that take advantage of the formal characteristics proper to narratives of detection, or whether it is legitimate to read them as narratives of a recognisable type that involve themselves in certain theoretical questions. In other words, critics defining the novels as anti-detective fictions are distinguishing them as parasitic on the detective genre, and thus in a sense as critical works rather than fiction in their own right.

We have seen how the eminently generic stories of Hammett can offer a model of detective fiction adequate to some of the demands of twentieth century thought on interpretation. There would appear to be little problem in categorising Borges' detective stories, such as 'Death and the Compass' and even the Don Isidro Parodi stories, as generic rather than anti-generic, because at the same time as they disrupt the reader's expectations they do so in a manner capable of comprehension within the genre's 'rules'. The fact is that, despite its typical political and moral conservatism, and its consolatory structure, the detective story is predicated on baffling the reader's expectation of the narrative. The principle of 'the least likely suspect', ridiculous though it may be, exemplifies how the detective form constantly strives to locate fresh and unexpected narrative possibilities. Eco acknowledges as

¹⁰¹ Brian McHale, *Constructing Postmodernism*, p.180.

much when he draws attention to the grid of narrative options drawn up by the Oulipo group.¹⁰² We can see this formal generosity, this almost protean adaptability to alternative (even antagonistic) narrative structures, if we ask the same generic question to a work that claims to destroy narrative expectations, Robbe-Grillet's *Les Gommes*.¹⁰³

Robbe-Grillet's novel seems to deny one of the basic expectations of the novel of detection, in that it constantly fails to deliver unequivocal facts. Even the name of the town in which it is set is not given. Of course, part of Robbe-Grillet's project is to confront the reader with narrative elements that cannot be integrated into a coherent fictional world as they paradigmatically are in detective fiction. The opening paragraph of *Dans le labyrinthe* confronts the reader with a Beckett-like series of flat contradictions -- outside it is raining, the trees rustle. It is sunny, there are no trees.¹⁰⁴ The effect is, or should be, to rend the reader away from a presumption that the narrative world is, in Borges' terms, magical. As Robbe-Grillet puts it: 'The world is neither significant nor absurd. It is, quite simply'.¹⁰⁵ He is polemicising for a narrative art that would correspond to Borges' category of the 'natural', in which there are no omens, no causes. 'Around us, defying the noisy pack of our animistic or protective adjectives,' Robbe-Grillet continues, 'things *are there*. Their surfaces are distinct and smooth, *intact*, neither suspiciously brilliant nor transparent'.¹⁰⁶ So, in *Les Gommes*, the erasers over which the detective Wallas spends so much time continually tease us with the prospect of narrative functionality. Their presence in a fiction of detection is a promise of significance, a promise that Robbe-Grillet forces the reader to confront and overcome.

¹⁰² *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, p.78.

¹⁰³ Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Les Gommes* (Paris: Minuit, 1953), translated by Richard Howard as *The Erasers* (New York: Grove, 1964).

¹⁰⁴ Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Dans le labyrinthe* (Paris: Minuit, 1959), p.7, translated by Richard Howard as *In the Labyrinth*, in *Two Novels by Robbe-Grillet* (New York: Grove, 1965).

¹⁰⁵ Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Pour un nouveau roman* (Paris: Minuit, 1963), translated as *For a New Novel* (New York: Grove, 1965), p.19.

¹⁰⁶ Robbe-Grillet, *For a New Novel*, p.20.

There seems to be more than adequate reason to label Robbe-Grillet's *nouveau roman* as anti-detective fiction. Nevertheless, it is not such a surprise that when Eco comes to discuss the project, he is concerned to identify ways in which Robbe-Grillet's practice does not fulfil some of the polemical aims declared for it, claiming that 'there is quite a discrepancy between what Robbe-Grillet says he is doing in his work and what he in fact does'.¹⁰⁷ A narrative order that declares the impenetrability of objects cannot help but produce an ordered vision of objects. In Robbe-Grillet's novels, writes Eco, 'things do not appear as extraneous metaphysical entities, totally unrelated to us; rather, they appear to have a very particular relationship with us, to be "intentioned" by us'.¹⁰⁸ We may well suspect that Eco is finding narrative order on a different level than Robbe-Grillet is concerned to disrupt it, but, in a sense, this is precisely the generic peculiarity that is being manipulated here. Robbe-Grillet is already hinting at the more thoroughly postmodernist concerns of the *nouveau nouveau roman*, but his novels, at least at this stage, still offer a Modernist recoverability of perspective.¹⁰⁹ Detective fictions far less narratologically sophisticated than those of Robbe-Grillet commonly present a narrative disorder that is resolved on a different level into a perfectly coherent order. Robbe-Grillet's note (*Prière d'insérer*) in the first edition of *Les Gommages* would appear to indicate that he, too, is perfectly aware that his fiction not only plays with the generic considerations of the detective form, but can be resolved within those considerations. He writes:

C'est un événement à caractère policier -- c'est-à-dire qu'il y a un assassin, un détective, une victime. En un sens, leurs rôles sont même respectés: l'assassin tire sur la victime, le détective *résout* la question, la victime meurt. Mais les relations qui les lient ne sont pas aussi simples, ou plutôt ne sont aussi simples qu'une fois le dernier chapitre terminé. Car le livre est justement le récit des vingt-quatre heures qui

¹⁰⁷ *The Open Work*, p.151.

¹⁰⁸ *The Open Work*, p.151.

¹⁰⁹ We might also say, adopting Bakhtin's terminology, that Robbe-Grillet is not offering a parody of detective fiction, but a stylization -- with the former reversing the 'direction' or 'orientation' of the model, while the latter preserves it. See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, translated by R.W. Rotsel (Ann Arbor: Ardi, 1973), pp.157-61.

s'écoulaient entre ce coup de pistolet et cette mort, le temps que la balle a mis pour parcourir trois ou quatre mètres -- vingt heures "en trop".

It's an event in the mode of the detective story -- that is to say that there is a murderer, a detective, a victim. In one sense, their roles are preserved: the killer fires at the victim, the detective *solves* the problem, the victim dies. However the relationships between them are not so straightforward, or more precisely are not as straightforward once the last chapter has finished. This is because the novel is precisely the narration of the twenty-four hours that elapse between the shot and the death, the time that the bullet took to travel three or four metres -- twenty-four hours "too long".¹¹⁰

The tease of the twenty-four hours 'too long' emphasises, in fact, not that the events 'ne sont pas aussi simples', but that they still fit within an overall framework of the detective tradition. We expect a narrative incoherence as we start a detective fiction. Robbe-Grillet demonstrates here an awareness of how he can appear to be operating inside the detective tradition, with the implicit challenge to the reader of detective stories to work out the puzzle, and at the same time develop his more artistic aims. *Les Gommages* cleverly maintains this stance of being simultaneously inside and outside the detective genre, with Robbe-Grillet seriously disrupting the narrative of time, the clarification of which is one of the prime aims of the detective story. Throughout *Les Gommages* narrative time is confused for the reader, appearances questioned. All the same, the solution to the teasing problem of the twenty-four hour bullet trajectory is provided within realistic terms that are no less improbable than can be found within the average detective novel.

This generic recuperability is also found in *Le Voyeur*, which places itself in the genre of the crime novel.¹¹¹ At the centre of the text is the crime, a death. It is represented by a blank page, an absence in the narrative structure as much as it is in the justificatory account of the (presumed) killer. Nevertheless, this aporia does not substantially deflect the reader from drawing a conclusion just as if this was a proclaimedly generic work. The narrative silence around the crime, like the narrative silence surrounding the bomb explosion in Conrad's novel of espionage and urban

¹¹⁰ Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Les Gommages*, back cover, my translation.

¹¹¹ Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Le Voyeur* (Paris: Minuit, 1955), translated by Richard Howard as *The Voyeur* (London: Calder, 1958).

paranoia, *The Secret Agent*, is narratologically disruptive at the same time as offering itself to the reader-as-detective for resolution according to principles of reasonability.

Of course, the term 'anti-detective' remains meaningfully descriptive of Robbe-Grillet's early work, but if even these stories are recuperable as being within the detective genre, then we may reach the same conclusion, *a fortiori*, about Eco's fiction. In fact, given that *Foucault's Pendulum* relies incessantly on demarcating rules of evidence, acceptable inference and the application of hypotheses to the real world, we may reasonably conclude that it is more accurately a meta-detective fiction. That is to say, it is not interested in *whodunit* -- the ironic but sincere answer to that question is 'nobody'. Instead, *Foucault's Pendulum* spends its time examining the process of detection, and in determining the source of the drive for this process. Its answer lies in the interpretive structure that dominates the novel -- the Plan.

The Plan: *Paranoia Moriartii*

The Plan is the ironic, imaginary construct devised by the Editors to parody the Diabolical manuscripts they find themselves editing. It is a conspiracy constructed from all available conspiracies, the Grand Narrative of conspiracy, seeking to explain every event onto which the paranoid have latched, from the destruction of the Templars to the Rosicrucian manifestos, the authorship of Shakespeare's plays, the career of John Dee, and the origins of freemasonry, magic and the notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The Editors feel that they have understood the simple rules of constructing fiction well enough to perform it mockingly. As he waits, alone, in Piedmont for the arrival of the Diabolicals, Casaubon is able to enumerate the principles of the Plan, which mimic the paranoid logic of Hermeticism:

Prima regola, i concetti si collegano per analogia. Non ci sono regole per decidere all'inizio se un'analogia sia buona o cattiva, perché qualsiasi cosa è simile a qualsiasi altra sotto un certo rapporto. [...]

La seconda regola dice infatti che, se alla fine tout se tient, il gioco è valido. [...]

Terza regola: le connessioni non debbono essere inedite, nel senso che debbono essere già state poste almeno una volta, e meglio se

molte, da altri. Solo così gli incroci appaiono veri, perché sono ovvi.
[...]

Così abbiamo fatto noi. Non abbiamo inventato nulla, salvo la disposizione dei pezzi.

Rule One: Concepts are connected by analogy. There is no way to decide at once whether an analogy is good or bad, because to some degree everything is connected to everything else. [...]

Rule Two says that if tout se tient in the end, the connecting works. [...]

Rule Three: The connections must not be original. They must have been made before, and the more often the better, by others. Only then do the crossings seem true, because they are obvious. [...]

And this is what we did. We didn't invent anything; we only arranged the pieces.¹¹²

Casaubon's attempt at self-justification betrays his complicity in the reception of the Plan. His description emphasises that the Editors were involved in a great game of intertextual pastiche, a literary and artistic exercise common to the late twentieth century. The construction of the Plan may not have the function or sincerity of artistic reappraisal that might qualify it as a form of Pop Art or what Charles Jencks would call 'radical eclecticism', but Casaubon's desire to disclaim responsibility for the Plan, either artistic or moral, still fails to convince.¹¹³ Even if Eco's reader is unaware of the intertextual, neo-avant-gardist *bricolages* constructed by members of the *Gruppo 63*, such as Edoardo Sanguineti, Nanni Balestrini and Antonio Porta, there are many other influential, and broadly related, intertextual artistic projects to which the Plan might be compared, such as the work of Philippe Sollers, Jean Ricardou and, in a less theoretically formulated manner, William Burroughs. Casaubon's desperate attempt to retain his moral disengagement, and Belbo's precariously maintained position as a spectator are betrayed by the strong artistic tradition of using precisely these methods of combinatory intertextuality as a mode of genuine artistic engagement with the world. We suspect at this point that Casaubon is still, to a degree, trapped within a paranoid vision, where the experiential world is mysteriously external to the observer, capable of objective apprehension, without the observer having a determining impact upon that world.

¹¹² *Foucault's Pendulum*, pp.489-90, p.618.

¹¹³ Charles Jencks, *Postmodernism* (London: Academy Editions, 1987), p.335.

Casaubon, more than even the other Editors, has difficulty understanding how the Plan, an object formulated to exist only in his own mind, can have real, measurable effects in the world.¹¹⁴ In this way, the Editors' attempted ironic self-removal from the Plan is fundamentally flawed. They are implicated within it. Casaubon has a belated realisation: 'I believe that you can reach the point where there is no longer any difference between developing the habit of pretending to believe and developing the habit of believing'.¹¹⁵ The suave and ironic Agliè crosses the same boundary, jumping from a position of apparent detachment to complete involvement at the first hint of new secret knowledge.

The measurable effects of the Plan begin instantly it leaves the collective consciousness of the Editors. Belbo, angry with Agliè, confides the Plan to him, as if it were true, knowing that beneath his urbane exterior, Agliè will burn with curiosity. 'You're only a hustler who lives off the three-card trick', Belbo thinks, 'and then you buy the Coliseum from the first hustler who hustles better than you'.¹¹⁶ Agliè's response, the very next day, is the blackmail achieved through the bomb on the train. Belbo's hustle is best because he offers the grandest conspiracy, the conspiracy that explains the variety of mysteries that occupy the likes of Agliè, and because he declares that he possesses the secret, the revelation itself. Of course, the clinching move is Belbo's silence on what that secret is, indicating its perfection, its impenetrability. 'His reticence about the final truth guaranteed the truth of its premises', we are told. 'For those who really believed in a secret tradition, he calculated, nothing was louder than silence'.¹¹⁷ As we will see, the equation of

¹¹⁴ Diotallevi understands his fatal cancer to be a punishment for the Plan's immoderate manipulation of history, and Belbo's increasing passion for the Plan is developed in counterpoint to his feelings of guilt for being non-participant in the war.

¹¹⁵ 'Credo non ci sia più differenza, a un certo punto, tra abituarsi a fingere di credere e abituarsi a credere', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.367; p.467.

¹¹⁶ 'sei soltanto un cialtroncello che vive sul gioco delle tre carte, e poi comperi il Colosseo dal primo cialtrone più cialtrone di te', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.434-5; p.552, my translation.

¹¹⁷ 'La sua reticenza sulla verità finale garantiva la verità delle premesse. Nulla, per chi davvero crede a una tradizione segreta (calcolava), è più fragoroso del silenzio', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.434; p.552.

silence with paranoid communication has quite a tradition. First, however, we must return to the sources of the conspiratorial behaviour of Agliè and his Diabolical compatriots.

Given the obvious set of twentieth century influences for the conspiracy model conjured up for the Plan, it is easy to forget that these mysterious cabals owe a great deal to classic detective fiction, particularly the most influential of all, the Holmes stories. One of the most memorable and problematic aspects of the later Sherlock Holmes stories is the introduction of the criminal mastermind, Professor Moriarty. Having made Holmes omniscient, Conan Doyle needed an adversary even more spectacularly efficient in order to even match the detective. Therefore, in order to kill off Sherlock Holmes, the Professor is both introduced and killed off in the same short story, 'The Final Problem'. One curious feature of Moriarty's short existence is that we never see an unequivocal result of his actions, nor do we see his face-to-face encounter with Holmes. Watson only sees 'a tall man pushing his way furiously through the crowd and waving his hand as if he desired to have the train stopped', identified by Holmes as Professor Moriarty as the two companions make good their escape.¹¹⁸ We do not witness, in particular, the plummet of Holmes and Moriarty from the Reichenbach Falls.

This invisibility is the result of the role that Moriarty has to fulfil, that of a worthy adversary to Holmes. It pushes him into a peculiar half-existence, forever beyond the reach of the law, and so clever that his influence cannot even be detected by someone less sensitive to the criminal underworld than Holmes. It is Holmes' famous description of Moriarty's web-like conspiracy that provides the model for the paranoid notions of conspiracy that would spring up with increasing frequency in twentieth century fiction, often with almost direct quotation, as with the villainous von Schwabing in John Buchan's *Mr Standfast*, who 'sat spinning his web like a great spider'.¹¹⁹ Holmes' description is worth quoting at length:

He is the Napoleon of Crime, Watson. He is the organizer of half that is evil and of nearly all that is undetected in this great city. [...] He

¹¹⁸ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Final Problem', in *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, p.257.

¹¹⁹ John Buchan, *The Complete Richard Hannay*, p.609.

sits motionless, like a spider in the centre of its web, but that web has a thousand radiations, and he knows well every quiver of each of them. He does little himself. He only plans. But his agents are numerous and splendidly organized. [...] The agent may be caught. [...] But the central power which uses the agent is never caught -- never so much as suspected.¹²⁰

There is a cast-iron illogic of this formulation that is a significant element of its appeal. The reader is flattered to be offered a glimpse of something allegedly impossible to see, so seduced by the idea of an insight into the secret order of things that the question of how the describer can know this information is dismissed. The paradoxicality of the formulation is remarkably similar to that associated with Rosicrucian invisibility. Eco has told the basic story of the Rosicrucians several times in recent works -- the publication in 1614 and 1615 of the two manifestoes proclaiming the existence of a secret sect, the vague progressiveness of its aims, the enthusiasm with which respondents claimed to be attuned to the Rosicrucian aims, and the mysterious silence which met all pleas for membership or further information.¹²¹ It is easy at this distance to assert that the manifestos, indeed the whole movement, was some form of game or hoax (like the Plan in *Foucault's Pendulum*), although it may also be possible, as Frances Yates suggests, to read them as allegories.¹²² Clearly however, Eco, like Borges, is interested in the Rosicrucian phenomenon not just for its origin, but also for its spectacular effects. The Rosicrucian manifestos produced an unprecedented outpouring of replies which all, to a greater or lesser degree, employed a paranoid logic. Eco gleefully quotes a typical Rosicrucian text as the epigraph to a chapter in *Foucault's Pendulum*, where its circular logic is baldly displayed:

¹²⁰ *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, p.250.

¹²¹ The classic study of the Rosicrucian phenomenon is Frances A. Yates' *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*. A relatively sceptical account that considers also later self-proclaimed Rosicrucian groups may be found in 'The Rosicrucians', Chapter 19 of Arkon Daraul's *A History of Secret Societies* (New York: Citadel, 1994), pp.191-201.

¹²² Yates, p.49.

Simply because they change and hide their names, do not give their right age, and by their own admission go about without allowing themselves to be recognized, there is no logic that can deny that they necessarily must exist.¹²³

As with the alleged undetectability of Moriarty, and with the silence that guarantees the truth of Belbo's secret, silence, the absence of a sign, is understood by the paranoid mind as a sign that confirms the presence of what it has already suspected. In fact, almost from the beginning, there has existed the feeling that Moriarty, for one, should be understood as a paranoid fantasy. T.S. Eliot mocked Holmes' logic by identifying not Moriarty, but Macavity the Mystery Cat, as the 'Napoleon of Crime', on the basis that no clue ever links the cat to the crime.¹²⁴ Eliot's refrain of '*Macavity's not there!*' can serve as an emphatic marker of the otherwise indistinct but nevertheless highly significant move in Holmes' thought from tracing tiny pieces of evidence to tracing the absence of evidence.

One of Holmes' best-known observations is based not, as one might expect, on an event, but on the lack of an event, a silence, the absence of a tell-tale sign. In investigating the disappearance of the eponymous racehorse in the story 'Silver Blaze', Holmes' apparently tangential comments on the case are facetiously challenged by a sceptical police inspector:

'Is there any other point to which you would wish to draw my attention?'

'To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time.'

'The dog did nothing in the night-time.'

'That was the curious incident,' remarked Sherlock Holmes.¹²⁵

¹²³ Heinrich Neuhaus, *Pia et ultimissima admonestatio de Fratribus Rosae-Crucis, nimirum: an sint? quales sint? unde nomen illud sibi asciverunt* (Danzig: Schmidlin, 1618), French edition 1623, p.5, translated by William Weaver in *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.189. This same quotation is employed in *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* (p.132) and *The Search for the Perfect Language* (p.180).

¹²⁴ T.S. Eliot, 'Macavity: the Mystery Cat', in *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, (London: Faber, 1939).

¹²⁵ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'Silver Blaze', in *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, p.34.

It goes without saying that the dog's silence emerges as a crucial point in the case, but this kind of reasoning from absence, from the lack of expected signs, is even more problematic than Holmes' normal abductive reasoning. It is this dangerously ungrounded abductive hypothesising, based on an absence of expected evidence, that Eliot is mocking. Holmes' reasoning here is suspiciously close to the favourite logical armament of the conspiracy-minded speculator, that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. The joke of Eliot's poem is the paranoid Rosicrucian logic that becomes increasingly familiar through a reading of *Foucault's Pendulum*. It is a *reductio ad absurdum* of Holmes' description of Professor Moriarty, 'never so much as suspected' of the crimes he plans. The point is taken up in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* by David Musto, who advances the association of Freud and Holmes through their shared involvement with cocaine, and suggests that Holmes was in the grip of a paranoid delusion attributable to cocaine addiction.¹²⁶ Musto labels this delusion *paranoia moriartii*, a pun bad enough to serve as a shorthand for the type of paranoid logic that has emerged from the Holmes stories, also fundamental to Rosicrucianism, and which receives abundant illustration in *Foucault's Pendulum*.¹²⁷

Of course, we have already seen Freud and Holmes juxtaposed in a more positive light by Carlo Ginzburg. In *The Name of the Rose*, the combination of their methods served as a good model of the abductive hypothesising employed by William of Baskerville. It even served as the basis of a good-humoured jest at Freud, when

¹²⁶ David F. Musto, 'Sherlock Holmes and Heredity', *Journal of the American Medical Association* 196:1, 45 and 'A Study in Cocaine', *Journal of the American Medical Association* 204:1, 27.

¹²⁷ The attribution of *paranoia moriartii* to Holmes has provided the inspiration for more than one work of fiction. Nicholas Meyer's best-selling *The Seven-per-cent Solution: Being a Reprint from the Reminiscences of John H. Watson, M.D.* (New York: Ballantine, 1975), turned into a film of the same name in 1976, has a cocaine-addicted Holmes fantasise that his old mathematics tutor, Professor Moriarty, is a criminal mastermind. He is cured by a consultation with Sigmund Freud. Meyer explicitly acknowledges Musto as an inspiration for his novel. Michael Dibdin's *The Last Sherlock Holmes Story* (London: Cape, 1978) is one of several Holmes pastiches that links the detective with the Jack the Ripper murders. In this instance, Holmes is suffering from a cocaine-induced split personality, with Moriarty (who is, in turn, also Jack the Ripper) as his Mr Hyde-like *alter ego*. Again, Moriarty is a paranoid projection of Holmes' desire to find an external source of order in the world, as Holmes blames him for the murders that he himself has committed.

William interprets Adso's dream of the *Coena Cypriani* as suggesting a solution to the mystery. Adso protests that dreams contain no truth. 'We already have so many truths in our possession', William replies, 'that if the day came when someone insisted on deriving a truth from our dreams, then the day of the Antichrist would truly be at hand'.¹²⁸

In *Foucault's Pendulum*, aside from providing us with a pseudo-clinical condition that can be attributed to the Diabolicals as well as to Sherlock Holmes, the juxtaposition of Freud and the detective tradition suggested by Ginzburg and Musto offers a more fundamental resonance towards which Eco's novel is working. Freud is the subject of two explicit references in *Foucault's Pendulum*. One is a throwaway, Woody Allen-style piece of banter. Casaubon answers Diotallevi's dismissively ironic jibe at Freud ('For me, psychoanalysis is for neurotics') in kind, saying: 'Yes, and the penis is nothing but a phallic symbol'.¹²⁹ This paradoxical lament for the naturalness of a physical sign is perfectly indicative of the general position adopted within the novel. The Editors already accept the arbitrariness of signification as an unavoidable fact. They are aware of the post-structuralist scepticism about the real basis of any sign. They are not traumatized by this absence of the real, the directly physical. They have learnt to live with its absence. They are, instead, nostalgic for a physically based certitude that they have never known. The full extent of this nostalgia is displayed, as we will see in due course, in the speeches of the pregnant Lia, the dying Diotallevi, and the chastened, isolated Casaubon of the novel's last pages. The other mention of Freud is an ironic speculation put forth by Lia as a means of expressing her immediate and prescient reaction to the Plan:

Ora immagina che un buontempone viennese, per tener allegri gli amici, si fosse divertito a inventare tutta la faccenda dell'Es, e dell'edipo, e avesse immaginato dei sogni che non aveva mai fatto, e dei piccoli Hans che non aveva mai visto... E poi che cos'è successo?

¹²⁸ 'Abbiamo già tante verità nelle mani che il giorno che arrivasse anche qualcuno a pretendere di cavare una verità dai nostri sogni, allora sarebbero davvero prossimi i tempi dell'Anticristo', *The Name of the Rose*, p.441; p.438.

¹²⁹ 'Per me la psicoanalisi è roba per nevrotici [...] Sì, e il pene è soltanto un simbolo fallico', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.368; p.469. Diotallevi's initial comment is similar to one usually attributed to the film producer Samuel Goldwyn: 'Anyone who goes to a psychiatrist should have his head examined'.

Che c'erano milioni di persone pronte a diventare nevrotiche sul serio.
E altre migliaia pronte a sfruttarle.

Imagine that a Viennese prankster, to amuse his friends, invented the whole business of the id and Oedipus, and made up dreams he had never dreamed and little Hanses he had never met. ... And what happened? Millions of people were out there, all ready and waiting to become neurotic in earnest. And thousands more ready to make money treating them.¹³⁰

This is a playful foreshadowing of the more serious forays into paranoid history that the Editors will later be pursuing. In its picture of an ironic joke that spirals out of its creator's control, to be taken seriously, it also foreshadows the way in which Belbo will find the ironic Plan flipped inside out and taken seriously. Casaubon recalls, too late, Lia's condemnation of the Plan. 'People are starved for plans', she warns. 'If you offer them one, they fall on it like a pack of wolves. You invent, and they'll believe. It's wrong to add to the inventions that already exist'.¹³¹ This does nothing to resolve the deep ambiguity expressed in Eco's work over the act of creative writing itself. Indeed, we will shortly see how the Editors are invested with some of the anxieties regarding Eco's position as critic-turned-author. All the same, Lia's position is evidently intended to support a position of moderate interpretation, which means only making abductive hypotheses when absolutely necessary. This, in fact, shows evidence of Eco's essentially scholastic attitude. In direct contrast to Jonathan Culler's suggestion that, all other things being equal, more interpretations are more interesting than fewer, *Foucault's Pendulum* appears to be generating a constrictive rule based on Ockham's Razor, whereby interpretations should not be posited without necessity.¹³²

¹³⁰ *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.418; p.532-3.

¹³¹ 'La gente è affamata di piani, se gliene offri uno ci si getta sopra come una muta di lupi. Tu inventi e loro credono. Non bisogna suscitare più immaginario di quanto ce ne sia', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.490; p.618.

¹³² The usual formulation of Ockham's Razor is '*Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem*' (Entities are not to be multiplied beyond necessity), although Ockham never uses this precise formulation (nor was the Razor particular to his work). Eco's apparent extension of the Razor to apply to interpretations rather than the objects of interpretation begs rather than answers the question of what is necessary. On Ockham and the Razor, see Arthur Hyman and James J. Walsh (eds.),

At the same time, the teasing scepticism of Freud stands alongside the novel's suspicion of Marxism in an overall scepticism of what Jean-François Lyotard labelled 'grand narratives'.¹³³ Marxism, especially, is given a human form, a contradictory and confused voice, in *Foucault's Pendulum*. Amparo, the lover whom Casaubon follows across to Brazil in the early sections of the novel, is 'beautiful, Marxist, Brazilian, enthusiastic, disenchanted'.¹³⁴ It is Amparo's inability to deny the occult influences of her syncretic religious background, culminating in her self-abandonment to a trance state at a *terreiro de candomblé* rite, that initiates Casaubon into the field of infinite resemblances.¹³⁵ She appears to be vulnerable precisely because she is Marxist, and hence always seeking an all-encompassing, totalizing, essentially paranoid system through which to interpret the world. Casaubon, becoming himself politically disenchanted, complains that he could no longer 'establish where progress lay, and where revolution, or to see the plot -- as Amparo's comrades expressed it -- of capitalism'.¹³⁶

Eco's suspicion of grand narratives such as Freudianism and Marxism (seen as early as his replacement of 'Absent Structure' with local structures of interpretation in *La struttura assente*) may appear typically post-structuralist, fitting his image as a 'consummate postmodernist'.¹³⁷ It has, however, a flavour of ascetic Thomist logic that suggests medieval scepticism more than it does postmodernist infinite

'William of Ockham', in *Philosophy in the Middle Ages: The Christian, Islamic and Jewish Traditions*, second edition (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1973), pp.649-51.

¹³³ See Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*.

¹³⁴ 'Amparo era bella, marxista, brasiliana, entusiasta, disincantata', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.129; p.158.

¹³⁵ Amparo, trying to explain her syncretic religious background to Casaubon, states 'I don't believe in it, but it's true' ('io non ci credo, ma è vero'), *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.135; p.163. Casaubon admits that it was at this point 'I began to let myself be lulled by feelings of resemblance' ('iniziai a lasciarmi cullare dal sentimento della somiglianza'), *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.135; p.164.

¹³⁶ 'stabilire dove stesse il progresso, dove la rivolta, dove la trama -- come si esprimevano i compagni di Amparo -- del capitale', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.134; p.163.

¹³⁷ Rushdie, p.271.

irony. Very early in *Foucault's Pendulum*, Casaubon is able to make a logical distinction, cited already in Chapter One, between the credulous and the incredulous. 'If two things don't fit,' he asserts, 'but you believe both of them, thinking that somewhere, hidden, there must be a third thing that connects them, that's credulity'.¹³⁸ Contrasted with this is the logical rigour of the sceptic:

Non è che l'incredulo non debba credere a nulla. Non crede a tutto. Crede a una cosa per volta, e a una seconda solo se in qualche modo discende dalla prima.

It isn't that the incredulous person believes in nothing. It's that he doesn't believe in everything. He believes in one thing at a time, and only in a second thing if it in some way follows from the first.¹³⁹

Casaubon's formula would only allow for interpretive validity in cases of deduction or, at best, inductive reasoning. In other words, *Foucault's Pendulum* seeks to place the very possibility of abductive hypothesis under question, returning us to a position where only scientific inquiry can produce reliable results. The combination of this scientific scepticism with a suspicion of grand narratives, all worked out through an exploration of marginal belief systems, cannot help but bring to mind Sir Karl Popper's famous attack on pseudoscience.

In *Conjectures and Refutations* Popper classifies grand narratives such as that of Marx and Freud alongside beliefs such as astrology, on the basis that they all make invalid claims to scientific status, and are hence pseudoscientific.¹⁴⁰ In fact, he claims, regardless of their truth content, none of them are scientific because none are capable of being properly tested. 'A theory which is not refutable by any conceivable event is non-scientific', he says. 'Irrefutability is not a virtue of a theory (as many people think) but a vice'.¹⁴¹ His description of pseudoscientific grand narratives

¹³⁸ 'Di due cose che non stiano insieme, crederle tutte e due, e con l'idea che da qualche parte ve ne sia una terza, occulta, che le unisce, questa è la credulità', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.47; p.49.

¹³⁹ *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.47; p.49.

¹⁴⁰ Karl R. Popper, 'Science: Conjectures and Refutations', Chapter One in *Conjectures and Refutations*, pp.33-65, especially pp.33-9.

¹⁴¹ Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, p.36.

presents them as little different to the mystical or occult beliefs with which *Foucault's Pendulum* predominantly deals:

I found that those of my friends who were admirers of Marx, Freud, and Adler, were impressed by a number of points common to these theories, and especially by their apparent *explanatory power*. [...] The study of any of them seemed to have the effect of an intellectual conversion or revelation, opening your eyes to a new truth hidden from those not yet initiated.¹⁴²

It may well be that Eco's decision to use Hermetic and mystical beliefs derives from Popper's rhetorical manoeuvre. The interpretive moderation that *Foucault's Pendulum* sketches out is broadly Popperian, and Eco does offer examples, in the behaviour of the Marxist Amparo and the asides on Freud, of how his attack on the Diabolicals may take on a more serious political edge. However, it is as though Eco is largely content to remain in the realm of the Hermetic and the occult, where the novel can revel in the ludicrous marginalia of history, offering up examples of Diabolical thought that entertain as much as they moralise.

In addition, *Foucault's Pendulum*, as we have noted, follows Borges' 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius' in taking the Rosicrucian phenomenon as a paradigmatic case of reality overwhelmed by an ordered fantasy. Eco's particular interest seems to be the logical impenetrability of Rosicrucian claims to secrecy, which offers Rosicrucianism a typically paranoid stability. Rosicrucians, it seems, cannot be spotted, and a true Rosicrucian will deny being a Rosicrucian. Hence, not only can silence be interpreted as a sign of existence, but also denials of Rosicrucianism become, under paranoid logic, evidence of Rosicrucianism. Rosicrucianism is unfalsifiable, and any attempts to disprove the existence of a Rosicrucian tradition become, to the believer, good evidence of a cover-up. The only viable solution, it would seem, is not to postulate such a thing in the first place, as Lia warns, not to add to the inventions already there.

The fascination and justification for Eco of the paranoia generated by the Plan is the manner in which it quickly escapes those who have generated it in a spirit of irony, and falls into the hands of the dangerous. Eco's lecture, 'Fictional Protocols',

¹⁴² Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, p.35.

draws a narrative line from the destruction of the Templars, through the Rosicrucian manifestos and their reception, up to the affair of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.¹⁴³ The murder of Belbo in *Foucault's Pendulum* is a shocking, bathetic, real death, that suggests that fantasy leads not just to reality, but to real pain. Even the name used by the Editors to refer to the occult writers under their charge, Diabolicals ('i diabolici'), subtly reinforces this process. In English, as in Italian, the term carries connotations of devilry. It would seem, however, that Eco is also playing on a neologism found in Michel Tournier's darkly comic novel about the psychology of fascism in Nazi Germany, *Le Roi des Aulnes*.¹⁴⁴ There, the paranoid narrator, Abel Tiffauges, a Frenchman who becomes the 'ogre' at the Nazi college of Kaltenborn, is finally told by his commandant that he has been overwhelmed by the signs which he has followed with such paranoid attention. 'Signs are irritable', says the commandant, 'and the symbol thwarted becomes a diabol'.¹⁴⁵ The commandant defines what he means in terms reminiscent of the disassociation of the signifier from the signified that so haunts Eco's fiction:¹⁴⁶

Car il y a un moment effrayant où le signe n'accepte plus d'être porté par une créature, comme un étendard est porté par un soldat. Il acquiert son autonomie, il échappe à la chose symbolisée, et, ce qui est redoutable, il la prend lui-même en charge.

For there is a terrifying moment when the sign no longer accepts being carried by a creature as a standard is carried by a soldier. It

¹⁴³ 'Fictional Protocols', Chapter Six in *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*, pp.117-40.

¹⁴⁴ Michel Tournier, *Le Roi des Aulnes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), translated by Barbara Bray as *The Ogre* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1997), previously published as *The Erl-King* (London: Doubleday, 1972).

¹⁴⁵ 'Les signes sont irritables. Le symbole bafoué devient *diabole*', *Le Roi des Aulnes*, p.473; p.302.

¹⁴⁶ The common root of 'diabolico', 'diabolical', 'diable' and, by extension, 'diabole', is the Greek *diabolos*, meaning that which disunites. In this respect Tournier's word-play, equating the arbitrifaction of signification with the Devil, mirrors Eco's association of it with the Biblical fall, in his essay, 'On the Possibility of Generating Aesthetic Messages in an Edenic Language', Chapter Three, in *The Role of the Reader*, pp.90-104.

acquires autonomy, it escapes from the thing symbolized, and -- this is what is frightening -- it takes over that thing.¹⁴⁷

To name the occult writers 'the Diabolicals' not only encapsulates the sense of Tournier's 'diabole', but does so by reference to a novel that concentrates its energy on exploring the paranoid, devilish roots of Nazism. Tiffauges is told not to attempt to find the object to which each sign refers. 'For these symbols are diabols,' he is told, 'and no longer symbolize anything. And saturation with them brings the end of the world'.¹⁴⁸ *Foucault's Pendulum* conjures some of the apocalyptic spirit that runs through Tournier's novel. At the same time, though, Eco seems only too aware that the arbitrariness of signification is perfectly normal, and should not be the end of the world, hence his concern to distinguish a Peircean unlimited semiosis from what he identifies as the infinite drift offered by deconstruction.¹⁴⁹ We will next see how Eco is sure to keep in place within *Foucault's Pendulum* a moderate interpretation of events, always available to the reader. There is a very serious sense in which, just as Eco described *The Name of the Rose* as a penance for the reader, *Foucault's Pendulum* can be thought of as an attempted re-education of the reader, an education in incredulity. For, although the sense of apocalyptic is present in the novel, it is dominated by a sense of the absurd. The paranoid thought that leads to Belbo's death can and should be overcome, and the novel provides the attentive reader (the reader-as-detective) with ample means to overcome it.

Moderate Readers and Immoderate Editors

As indicated earlier, one of the strengths of *Foucault's Pendulum* is the manner in which it encapsulates the material that it is criticising. The exposition of a substantial quantity of obscure (in Eco's lexicon, non-Encyclopaedic) information is achieved in a variety of ways, but typically involves the three Editors conversing on

¹⁴⁷ *Le Roi des Aulnes*, p.473; p.302-3.

¹⁴⁸ 'Car ses symboles sont diabolos: ils ne symbolisent plus rien. Et de leur saturation naît la fin du monde', *Le Roi des Aulnes*, p.474; p.303.

¹⁴⁹ See *The Limits of Interpretation*, pp.32-4.

an occult or esoteric topic, or having it explained to them by the garrulous Agliè. The stilted, preposterously detail-laden conversations may be off-putting for some readers, but they form a narrative position in the novel that falls somewhere between the exploratory openness of academic prose and the teasing elusiveness of detective fiction. Eco is unafraid of devoting two chapters (Thirteen and Fourteen, consisting of some twenty pages in the Italian edition) to Casaubon's narrative of the history of the Templars. Indeed, at such moments the difference between novelistic exposition and historiography is deliberately elided. Halfway through Chapter Thirteen the framing quotation marks drop away from Casaubon's discourse, encouraging the reader to move away from understanding the story of the Templars as an aspect of *Foucault's Pendulum* and to begin considering it more as historical evidence applicable to an argument about paranoid thought. At the same time, this discourse is seductive, attempting to engage the reader's interest just as it does the Editors'. Significantly, Casaubon realises that he has seduced himself by telling a 'beautiful story': 'I realized that I had been dreaming aloud and -- the shame of it -- with feeling'.¹⁵⁰ Such moments are part of the general movement of the Editors from the status of sceptical, epistemologically confident observers to epistemologically confused narrators.¹⁵¹

Just as importantly, the status of the novel as a whole is raised as an issue. Reading *Foucault's Pendulum*, it can frequently seem as though it consists of two superimposed narratives. The first is an orthodox, expository non-fiction narrative, which recounts historical examples of paranoid interpretation and, crucially, provides illustrations of how individuals may come to read in such a paranoid fashion. The second is the narrative of discovery which underlies this, the narrative which promises real conspirators and real occult drama. The *in media res* opening of Casaubon awaiting the Diabolical rite in the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers is needed to set up the double time-frame of the detective story, albeit a somewhat reversed version. Instead of an initial crime, which is resolved by the detective's

¹⁵⁰ 'una storia bellissima'; 'avevo sognato, con sentimento (che vergogna), ma ad alta voce', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.81; p.93.

¹⁵¹ The fundamental question of the existential status of the Plan is, of course, an ontological one, but is not profoundly indeterminate. I am here referring to the manner in which the Editors find the structures of knowledge in which they place such faith apparently undermined through the novel.

investigative reconstruction of the past, *Foucault's Pendulum* presents an imaginative reconstruction of the past which causes the crime of Belbo's death. The novel's chronological re-ordering gives the justification for it to be read as a detective fiction.

This tension between the novel *qua* novel and as non-fictional exegesis produces some curious effects, with which Eco is willing to play. Each chapter is prefaced by an epigraph relating to paranoid interpretation, sometimes a quotation that is capable of paranoid interpretation, such as lines from Dante or Shakespeare, and the lines from a *Nag Hammadi* scroll that preface Chapter Fifty. There are also occasionally quotations that ask to be understood as sceptical comments on the Diabolicals, but most frequently the epigraphs are derived from sources such as Johann Valentin Andreae, Aleister Crowley, the pyramidologist Piazzzi Smyth, and the *Corpus Hermeticum* itself. These epigraphs contribute to the reader's awareness of the exact nature of Diabolical thought, by providing confirmatory evidence of descriptions and claims made within the main text. They help to enlarge the reader's encyclopaedia so as to include Hermetic and occult knowledge appropriate to the novel.

Eco playfully places the epigraphs in a narratorially ambiguous position, which contributes to an ambiguity running through Casaubon's narration. The novel is narrated in the first person, with none of the editorial apparatus which alerted the reader of *The Name of the Rose* to its ludic aspect. When Casaubon breaks into Belbo's computer, he finds, *inter alia*, 'a file composed only of quotations. Derived from Belbo's most recent reading, I recognised them at once'.¹⁵² Casaubon notices that there are one hundred and twenty quotations. The number is significant in terms of the Plan, and the reader notices that there are the same number of chapters in the novel, each with an epigraph.¹⁵³ 'It is now impossible to reread Belbo's writings,' says Casaubon, 'and the whole story that I am going back over in my mind, except

¹⁵² 'un intero *file* che raccoglieva solo citazioni. Tratte dalle letture più recenti di Belbo, le riconoscevo a prima vista', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.42; p.43, my translation.

¹⁵³ In fact, Chapter 97 is prefaced by three quotations, and Chapter 104 has two, making a total of one hundred and twenty three quotations. It may be possible to read this as a further undermining of the narrative status, but such a reading would seem to be verging on the paranoid itself. Belbo's quotation file serves no other identifiable purpose in the novel, so it seems safe to assume that the quotations are intended to be equated with the epigraphs.

in the light of that file. I count those passages like beads on a heretical rosary'.¹⁵⁴ This proclaims the narrative structure to be the thoughts of Casaubon as he awaits his destiny (on the last page he says: 'I would have liked to have written down everything I thought today'), also explaining the structuration of the novel into ten sections according to the *Sefirot*.¹⁵⁵ We can reconstruct the whole narrative as being that of Casaubon in the process of coming to terms with the events he has recently experienced, especially the apparent fulfilment of the ironic Plan as a real entity. Despite his conclusions about the deluded nature of the Diabolicals, Casaubon is unable to shake himself out of a mind-set that sees things in Hermetic terms. Hence, he tracks the progress of the narrative by reference to the characteristics of the *Sefirot*, and treats each quotation on Belbo's file as a form of prophecy, albeit one where he acknowledges that the meaning derives from within himself. Casaubon's framework for understanding his situation, though he knows it to be in essence wrong, still determines his view.

This coherent and psychologically meaningful reading of the narrative construction of the novel is betrayed in Chapter 114, just after Belbo has been killed and left swinging from the Foucault Pendulum. The epigraph quotes extensively from a private letter written in 1984 by Mario Salvadori of Columbia University, and concerns the behaviour of pendulums and double pendulums, specifically the case of a human suspended from a pendulum. The provenance and the level of detail make it clear that the letter forms part of Eco's research for the novel, particularly as it explains the behaviour of the Foucault Pendulum with Belbo's body attached described a few pages earlier. Any attempt to understand it as a part of Belbo's file of quotations would be spectacularly inefficient, requiring the reader to speculate a series of improbable circumstances for which there is no textual evidence. We are therefore left to consider this quotation as an intrusion of the empirical author into the world of the narrative, exposing in typical postmodern fashion the fictive nature of the text. There seems, however, no benefit in making such an exposure within a

¹⁵⁴ 'Ora non posso rileggere i testi di Belbo, e la storia intera che mi riportano alla mente, se non alla luce di quel *file*. Sgrano quegli excerpta come grani di un rosario eretico', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.42; p.43, my translation.

¹⁵⁵ 'Vorrei aver scritto tutto ciò che ho pensato da questo pomeriggio a ora', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.508; p.641.

text that otherwise adopts the ontology of a realist text, unless it is to remind the reader that the novel is also the product of an academic mind, a mind that probes history, philosophy, linguistics and science for answers to questions of interpretation. We may feel justified in suspecting, therefore, that the displays of postmodernist playfulness in which *Foucault's Pendulum* engages are not intended to remove us to a level on which we may consider the nature of narrative, but to bring us back to the level on which the text has always been quietly operating -- that of an investigation of paranoid interpretation by Professor Eco, a professional semiotician.

It is important at this point to distinguish this position from the assumption identified earlier, that Eco's novels are simply narrative versions of his semiotic theories. It would be ludicrous to deny some level of relationship between the two, but the question is the nature of that relationship. My contention is that the author plays between these two levels of interpretation available to the readers of his novels, presenting a formally coherent story of detection and simultaneously appealing to the awareness of Eco as a semiotician, who is read as presenting a case study of paranoid interpretation from which we may learn. We can only begin to take note of these two different but not necessarily antipathetic levels of the novel when we distance ourselves from the Editors. In effect, they are the case study, and the reader must comprehend their fall from grace in order to understand the interpretive lessons which the novel can offer.

The simplest question to ask regarding the Editors is: how do they get caught up in a Plan in which they do not (or did not) believe? The most cogent answer relates to their initial situation. They stand, to begin with, in an *alazon-eiron* relationship, comprehensible in terms similar to the relationship between William and Adso in *The Name of the Rose*. They operate as the contractive, cynical, worldly, ironic counterparts to the Diabolicals. They, as readers par excellence, edit the naïve products of the writers and so are capable of producing acceptable books as a result. However, they each, individually and collectively, lean more and more to the creative, the naïve, the writer's side, and so gradually lose their critical, ironic, distance. Belbo's hesitant experiments in fiction contain 'all his precision and passion,' according to Casaubon, 'the disappointment of an editor who could write only through others while yearning for creativity of his own. It also has the moral

severity that led him to punish himself for desiring something to which he did not feel entitled'.¹⁵⁶

The moral tenor which underlies this, finding its strongest expression in Belbo's self-disgust, is crucial. The 'sin' of the Editors is a form of class transgression, a betrayal of their scholarly duties. Once they are asked to edit books for the Hermetic 'Isis Unveiled' series, they end up degrading their own editing efforts because they cannot have respect for (in other words, artistic faith in) the books on which they are working. Their job requires that they are critical, but the books are so credulous that there is little role for genuine editorial intervention. Where, in other works, a *non sequitur* or poorly researched assertion might require correction, in Diabolical books it can be an essential part of the architecture of the argument, juxtaposing or modifying otherwise unrelated elements so that they seem to relate to one another. At the same time, the Editors are obliged to suspend their critical faculties in order to edit the books at all, resisting the impulse to bin the entire manuscript.

Eventually, the Editors become persuaded that the creative process is facile, as it is so transparent in the books that they are now forced to spend their time processing. They persuade themselves to parodically and mechanistically replicate this poor mode of creation with the Plan. What is missing, particularly from Belbo, the one who secretly writes although he knows he is not a writer, is the creative artist's faith in his work. The Editors have no faith in their intentions, for understandable reasons, but their audience, the Diabolicals, cannot shake the habit of inferring sincere intention to what they hear. It does not appear to occur to Agliè in the crucial conversation where he hears the essence of the Plan that Belbo might been fabricating a story.

There is another way of looking at this issue of creativity in the novel. As the Editors recognise, the Diabolicals tend not to realise that they are engaged in acts of creation, thinking instead that they are merely editing together information in order to elucidate the underlying truth. So, the Diabolical writers believe themselves to be doing little more than the Editors, and yet produce a result that looks to the Editors

¹⁵⁶ 'la sua acribia, la sua passione, la sua delusione di redattore che scrive per interposta persona, la sua nostalgia di una creatività mai realizzata, il suo rigore morale che lo obbligava a punirsi perché desiderava ciò a cui non sentiva di avere diritto', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.62; p.68.

appealingly like fiction. The naïve sincerity of this belief infects the Editors to the extent that, although they always retain an awareness of the constructed nature of the Plan, they become increasingly confused as to its nature. 'When did we ever invent anything?' protests Belbo at one point. 'We've always started with objective data, with information in the public domain'.¹⁵⁷ In Eco's terminology of interpretive structures, they start to treat their local structure as though it were the Structure. They confuse history with fiction, the work of editors with that of novelists. It is this confusion, this unwillingness to acknowledge fiction as fiction that undoes the Editors, through the agency of the blindly literalistic Diabolicals.

Each Editor has his own path to hell. Casaubon and Belbo are linked from the beginning, when they fail to become fully involved in the revolutionary moment of the late sixties. For Belbo in particular, this is a second missed opportunity, and he cannot forgive himself for failing the moral test of involvement yet again. It is for this reason that he identifies himself with the eponymous disgraced sailor in Conrad's *Lord Jim*. Cursed by the awareness that he missed his opportunities for glory because of his age during the war, and his cowardice during the '68 uprising, Belbo seeks out, almost literally creates, the circumstances of one last test. Belbo is captured and threatened by the Tres, the rapidly formed Diabolical sect who converge on the Conservatoire in Paris. He retains his dignity, and refuses to provide the Tres with the secret, or to rehearse the by now futile denial that there is a secret at all. 'I believe', says Casaubon, 'that at that moment he decided not to allow himself to be frightened any more'.¹⁵⁸ In fact, this moment allows Belbo to achieve some self-respect by mirroring his epiphanic childhood experience of playing the trumpet at a partisan funeral.

Diotallevi is a less fully developed character, his only notable characteristic being his insistence, against the evidence, that he is Jewish. With Diabolical logic, he takes possibilities as though they were true (that is to say, he makes abductive hypotheses which he then takes to be demonstrated). As such, he illustrates the manner in which the logic of the Diabolicals persists in conflating, like Golden Age detectives, the

¹⁵⁷ 'quando mai abbiamo inventato? Siamo sempre partiti da dati oggettivi, in ogni caso notizie di pubblico dominio', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.401; p.510.

¹⁵⁸ 'In quel momento, ne sono sicuro, ha deciso che non doveva più lasciarsi spaventare', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.470; p.594.

structure of the mind with the structure of the world. He is in fact a foundling, and so argues 'nobody can prove my father wasn't Jewish'.¹⁵⁹

Finally, as we have seen, Casaubon is enchanted by making connections. He forms his business as an academic Sam Spade on the eminently paranoid basis that one should connect, only connect. 'There are always connections', he rationalises, 'you only have to want to find them'.¹⁶⁰ For all of the intellectual eccentricity displayed by Belbo and Diotallevi, and the concern Casaubon expresses for their later paranoid excesses, it must be remembered that their interest in Diabolical thought, and the generation of the Plan, followed the arrival and enthusiasm of Casaubon. There seems to be a deliberate attempt to introduce an amount of discomfort for the reader, who naturally identifies with the narratorial position, and who is slowly brought to address, at least in some measure, a complicity in the paranoid interests and games of the narrator.

Casaubon has, or should have, a creative outlet in his relationship with Lia, and then in the birth of their baby, the ultimate healthily creative act. Even here, though, it is relevant that Casaubon rarely refers to the baby by its name, Giulio. At the birth we only hear the baby's name from the mouth of Lia, whereas Casaubon resorts, after the birth, to referring to it primarily by the name he and Lia used when they did not know the baby's sex -- 'la Cosa', The Thing.¹⁶¹

Given the novel's nostalgic yearning for natural reality, particularly Casaubon's sentimental vision of Lia and Giulio at the novel's end, it would seem that referring to the baby as The Thing is intended to emphasise its *haecceity*; that it is resolutely and concretely itself, not a sign or allegory of anything else. However, such an arrest of unlimited semiosis is clearly impossible. In fact, this habit of referring to Giulio as the Thing is one of the most disturbing aspects of the novel. The callousness of the naming is mitigated perhaps only by the fact that the baby is infrequently mentioned, and hardly seems real to us. Casaubon does indicate that the

¹⁵⁹ 'Nessuno può dimostrare che mio nonno non fosse ebreo', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.68; p.76. Of course, as Judaism is matrilinear, this is ironically irrelevant anyway.

¹⁶⁰ 'Le connessioni ci sono sempre, basta volerle trovare', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.180; p.225.

¹⁶¹ See *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.352; p.446.

marginalisation of the baby, and of Lia, in the text is a deliberate gesture of protection, saying that 'she must remain outside this business, she and the child'.¹⁶² This defence does not, however, serve to indicate the prominence that Lia and the baby are assumed to have in the mind of Casaubon. Aside from those occasions when Casaubon mentions it while narrating other events, the following, the moment when Casaubon arrives at the hospital to help with the birth, only to find that he has missed it, is the entirety of the baby's sole appearance in the novel:

Per la prima volta vedevo la fronte di Lia in tutto il suo splendore. Aveva accanto una Cosa.

"È Giulio," disse.

Il mio Rebis. Lo avevo fatto anch'io, e non con brandelli di corpi morti, e senza sapone arsenicale. Era intero, aveva tutte le sue dita al posto giuste.

Pretesi di vederlo tutto. "O che bel pistolino, oh che palle grosse che ha!" Poi mi misi a baciare Lia sulla fronte nuda: "Ma è merito tuo, cara, dipende dal vaso."

For the first time I saw Lia's forehead in all its splendour. Next to her was the Thing.

"It's Giulio," she said.

My Rebis. I, too, had made him, and not with chunks of dead bodies or arsenic soap. He was whole, all his fingers and toes were in the right place.

I insisted on seeing everything. "Oh what a super little cock, oh what big balls he's got!" Then I kissed Lia on her naked brow: "The credit is yours, darling; it all depends on the vessel."¹⁶³

Aside from the faintly Rabelaisian carnality of the details of little cock and big balls, the real, physical existence of the baby is hardly given space within the narrative to exert itself before starting to fade again, obscured by Casaubon's fearful enmeshment in the Plan. It is worth noting that there is a note of disgust with the purely physical in Casaubon's use of the term 'la Cosa'. He also uses the term to

¹⁶² 'Ma deve rimaneri fuori da questa storia, lei e il bambino', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.181; p.226.

¹⁶³ *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.352; pp.446-7, my translation.

refer to the pale, sickly Diotallevi as he nears death.¹⁶⁴ Casaubon's continuing fascination with the material of the Diabolicals, extending as far as his reconstruction of the narrative along cabbalistic principles (making the narrative of the Plan obey essentially the same rules as the Plan itself), militates against his professed desire to recapture the simple and natural. Like the reader who has been following his narrative, Casaubon continues to have little time for the moderate, everyday elements of his life, preferring to focus on the blend of fantasy and reality offered by the Diabolicals.

The characters of the three Editors, individually and together, indicate that they are to be taken as representative of obsessions and intellectual tendencies that are essential to the novel's discussion of paranoid thought. Each individually, it appears, would not have taken the Plan to the extreme. Together, however, their predilections combine in the most unfortunate manner. The Plan, their ironic game at the expense of the Diabolicals, takes on a life of its own, becoming a Diabol. After a while, the flow of ideas ceases to be assignable to any individual, but appears to come from between them. As a result, the Plan exists between and somehow above them, drawing from their individual skills and preoccupations, but simultaneously contriving to escape their critical faculties.

Of course, the figure who takes final responsibility for the research, detail and form of the Plan is the empirical author, Eco himself. The physical and psychological dangers that face the Editors as a result of their construction of the Plan must to some extent reflect a feeling on the part of the empirical author that the business of creating fiction, which absorbs the writer in an unreal world for such long periods of time, is spiritually unhealthy. The play in *Foucault's Pendulum* between the narrative as detective fiction and historical prose can be seen to operate not simply as a device enabling the text to be read as having a more general applicability, but also as an acknowledgement that the empirical author is inevitably implicated in narrative games he is playing. In the transparent enjoyment that has gone into the creation of the Plan, and the novelistic structure that surrounds it, Eco has partaken of the guilty pleasures of creation just as heartily as any of the Editors.

¹⁶⁴ 'Then Diotallevi, breathing like the Thing in the science-fiction movie, talked' ('E allora Diotallevi, respirando come la Cosa dei film di fantascienza, aveva parlato'), *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.445; p.565.

This equation of the Editors with Eco is emphasised by the clear autobiographical association each has with the empirical author.¹⁶⁵ Belbo's Piedmontese wartime experiences are acknowledged by Eco as being close to his own childhood.¹⁶⁶ In addition to this, Belbo, like Eco, is a keen creator of intertextually playful fiction, examples of which litter the novel. Casaubon, of course, has his doctorate in medieval studies, like Eco. He also seems to follow a similar political trajectory to Eco, if only in that after the explosive events of the student uprisings of 1968, he becomes disillusioned with the political activism that produced it. Finally, Diotallevi shares a very unusual link with Eco, in the origins of his name. Although Diotallevi insists upon his Jewishness, which he never practices as part of the Jewish community, Belbo reminds him that 'Diotallevi is a good-luck name given to foundlings by city officials. Your grandfather was a foundling'.¹⁶⁷ As Eco has indicated in interview, this curious naming is also autobiographical:

His grandfather was a foundling and, as the writer recently discovered through a friend who works in the Vatican library, he was given the name by an inventive civil servant sometime before the turn of the century. Eco stands for 'Ex caelis oblatus', Latin for 'offered by the heavens'.¹⁶⁸

Obviously, all three exhibit a fascination with the Hermetic and the paranoid that cannot but be a reflection of Eco's own interest in that peculiar publishing genre. Aside from this inevitable biographical correlation, the individual autobiographical references require some explanation. It is not really a question of speculating on the authorial motivation for this. The evidence for the autobiographical links is in the

¹⁶⁵ On Eco's use of autobiographical elements in the novel see Roberto Controneo, *La diffidenza come sistema: Saggi sulla narrativa di Umberto Eco* (Milan: Anabasi, 1995).

¹⁶⁶ 'It is true that I spent my youth on the banks of the river Belbo [...] where I underwent some of the ordeals that I attributed to Jacopo Belbo', *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p.84.

¹⁶⁷ 'Diotallevi è un nome benaugurale, spesso dato dagli ufficiali comunali ai trovatelli. E tuo nonno era un trovatello', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.68; p.76.

¹⁶⁸ Mel Gussow, 'A Word-Bending Wit's Riff on the Unreachable', *New York Times*, Tuesday 28th November 1995, B1.

public domain, largely placed there by Eco himself. It is not an issue of what this tells us about the author, but of what the presence of autobiographical detail in this precise and systematic manner performs as a function in the text.

The only function that can reasonably be performed by the autobiographical links is to indicate the closeness of the Editors to the authorial position. That is to say, whatever ironic or critical distance is maintained by the narrative, it can never be a chasm. It can never be the case that the behaviour and the mistakes of the Editors, their tendencies toward paranoid thought, are exclusive to themselves. The reader is already sympathetic to the paranoid tendencies of the Editors through the inherent persuasiveness of the first-person narration, and the presence of autobiographical ties with the empirical author for each of the Editors merely serves to re-emphasise the all-inclusiveness of Eco's warning about paranoid thought. Not only the Diabolicals, it seems to say, but the narrator, his friends, and even a Professor of Semiotics, Eco himself, are liable to think Diabolically, if they are not careful.

The Pendulum and the Trumpet: Reasonability and Nostalgia

If Diabolical logic, the tendency to mistake abductive hypothesis (and hence speculative fiction) for reality, is presented as inescapable and potentially endemic in this novel, then how is it that *Foucault's Pendulum* can be read as a plea for reasonability, as Robert Artigiani puts it, 'a warning against ideological excess'?¹⁰⁹ This can only be the case if the reader is capable of making a normative, moderate reading of the narrative on the basis of the material offered, a reading which can take the fall of the Editors as a moral lesson comprehensible within a broadly realistic framework. In other words, the reader must be capable of piecing together the mistakes of the Editors from a position of superiority that equates to the position taken by a fictional detective over the events investigated. We have already seen how the novel offers historical and cultural detail to the reader as assurance of its *bona fides*. It holds to the Golden Age detective principle of 'fair play' inasmuch as it clearly differentiates between historical fact and speculation on the level of the

¹⁰⁹ Robert Artigiani, 'Image-Music-Pinball', 855.

discourse in all circumstances, except in the case of the direct experience of the narrator. The narration of claims and counter-claims of historical fact is scrupulous in its demarcation between accepted fact and opinion. It is the events resolutely contained within the fictional world that appear ambiguous -- the suspected murder of Colonel Ardent, the possessions at the Brazilian syncretic rite, the homunculi growing in a Hermeticist's greenhouse, the ectoplasmic entities that emerge from the mediums at the final rite under the Foucault Pendulum. In each of these cases, the reader is tantalised with a narrative event that appears to show something exceptional, some intrusion of the fantastic into the mundane world. But simultaneously the reader is prepared with a moderate explanation of the event to hold alongside the more esoteric explanation.

So, in the case of Ardent's supposed murder in a hotel room, the corpse is only seen by a drunk given to fantasising. The reader learns that 'it wouldn't be the first time the old man saw things that weren't there'.¹⁷⁰ The text leaves the possibility of a murder open, but balanced by the possibility that Ardent simply left the hotel. The reader is expected to make an interpretive decision based not so much on the textual evidence, which is ambiguous, but on the principle of moderateness, in effect Ockham's Razor, which will select the explanation that does not require the existence of occult secrets, murderers, and Hermetic conspiracies.

In the same way, the homunculi which the Editors see growing in ampules are described with a carefully maintained ambivalence. The reader already suspects that Casaubon's narration at this point may be less than reliable, as he has been seeing extraordinary sights at a party where he has been given a powerful alcoholic drink. 'Perhaps it was spiked with something', he admits, 'my head began to swim'.¹⁷¹ The reader is therefore primed to take the sceptical view when Casaubon cannot decide how real the homunculi are:

Era difficile stabilire se si trattasse di modelli in plastica, in cera, o di esseri viventi, anche perché la leggera torbidezza del liquido non

¹⁷⁰ 'non è la prima volta che ha le traveggole', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.125; p.153.

¹⁷¹ 'Forse conteneva qualcosa: incominciò a girarmi la testa', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.269; p.341, my translation.

lasciava capire se il lieve ansimare che li animava fosse effetto ottico o realtà.

It was hard to determine whether they were models made of plastic or wax, or whether they were living beings, and the slight opacity of the liquid made it impossible to tell if the faint pulse that animated them was an optical illusion or reality.¹⁷²

By the time the climactic scene in the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers is reached, the Model Reader has been extensively trained in moderate interpretation. The existence of a more interesting, immoderate interpretation of events is acknowledged, only to be rejected in favour of the more conservative explanation. The moderate position is set out in full at only three points in the novel, three set-piece speeches which nevertheless remain unanswered in the novel's dialogue between the sceptical and the credulous. The first of these, perhaps surprisingly, is given by Agliè. To demonstrate the facile nature of a book of pyramidology over which he has been asked to look, Agliè first reels off a series of numerological correlations found by the notorious Piazzì Smyth. He then repeats the feat for a humble lottery kiosk, finding numerological significances in its basic measurements. For Agliè, 'it's natural for the kiosk and the pyramid, both works of man, to reproduce in their structure, unconsciously, the harmonies of the cosmos'.¹⁷³ Agliè, the novel's model of an ironic post-structuralist, far from believing in nothing, believes in everything, whether it be factual or fantastic. 'Error can be the unrecognized bearer of truth', he says. 'True esotericism does not fear contradiction'.¹⁷⁴

The reader is encouraged not to stray too far in the direction of true esotericism by the maternal intervention of Casaubon's girlfriend Lia, who twice chastises him for his involvement in the Plan, offering alternative interpretations to his increasingly Hermetic speculations. First, just before announcing her pregnancy, Lia offers her

¹⁷² *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.275; p.347.

¹⁷³ 'è naturale che il chiosco e la piramide, entrambi opera umana, inconsciamente abbiano riprodotto nella loro struttura le armonie del cosmo', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.230; p.289.

¹⁷⁴ 'errore può essere il portatore misconosciuto della verità. Il vero esoterismo non ha paura dei contrari', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.268; p.339.

own numerological reading, based on common physical attributes. 'There are no archetypes', she warns, 'there's the body'.¹⁷⁵ She proceeds to elaborate a chain of connections as detailed as any offered by Agliè. Her interpretation is, when examined, not significantly more demonstrable than his. For instance, she asserts that there are ten commandments because there are ten digits on the hands. The reader is ready to be persuaded, however, because her interpretation is moderate. It requires belief in little more than basic psychology and the human body.

Lia's second intervention is to apply a rigorous reading to the secret messages of Colonel Ardent which, in some ways, start the whole drama. The Colonel decoded the messages as referring to a Templar secret, an explanation which the Editors are happy to accept as the starting point for their Plan. When Lia learns of the Plan, she examines the incomplete and coded documents for herself. She then sits Casaubon down to unravel the conspiratorial explanations in which he has become entangled. 'Listen carefully', she tells him, 'because I'm going to demonstrate to you that the simplest explanation is always the best'.¹⁷⁶ She uses standard historical, geographical, linguistic and cryptographic information to provide a comprehensive reading of a manuscript that turns out to be not a recitation of the Templars' secret plan, but a merchant's delivery list. In short time, she also disposes of the message in code as a *jeu d'esprit* by the finder of the first message.¹⁷⁷ Casaubon legitimately objects that Lia's interpretation is 'no more valid than the colonel's', but this is not the point.¹⁷⁸ Lia's interpretation is efficient, scientific (in the Popperian sense), and above all, moderate.

¹⁷⁵ 'non ci sono gli archetipi, c'è il corpo', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.287; p.362.

¹⁷⁶ 'Stai attento [...] perché ti dimostro che le spiegazioni più semplici sono sempre le più vere', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.419; p.533.

¹⁷⁷ At this point, it is clear that the two messages are intended as ironic jokes against the two messages allegedly found in the French village of Rennes-le-Château in 1891 by the local priest, Bérenger Saunière. These documents have sustained a cottage industry in conspiratorial speculation to this day. References to Rennes-le-Château in *Foucault's Pendulum* make it clear that Eco knows this story well. In particular, the Editors' first attempt at generating Diabolical text using the computer Abu results in a *preçis* of the thesis of the best known book on Rennes-le-Château, the best-selling *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*.

¹⁷⁸ 'vale quanto la congettura del colonnello', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.422; p.537.

The reader, like Casaubon, is wittily chastened, and left feeling that if one can only reject the immoderate interpretations, then what will be left will be the truth. In fact, what one is left with is a nostalgic fantasy. Having stripped away all that is excessive and unreasonable (at least in terms of the internal logic of the fiction), it remains to be seen whether there is a centre, a fixed point in the narrative universe which can guarantee meaning. Lia's mixture of the carnal and the scholarly would seem to be the best that is on offer, but it itself is ultimately as arbitrary and mythical as the more esoteric interpretations. Lia's approach resembles that of William in *The Name of the Rose*, carefully constructing appropriate and testable hypotheses -- local structures of interpretation -- that can explain portions of the world. When she attempts a grander explanatory structure, her numerology of the body, as appealing as it may be, cannot claim any final truth content. In fact, Lia's reduction of all occult and spiritual exercise to a reflection of the physicality of the body, while it has the ring of scepticism, is imbued with a pervasive nostalgia for a signifying system that never leaves the physical, the external. In Lia's cosmology, the body is the centre of the universe.

Foucault's Pendulum has, by the time that we reach Lia's plea for moderation, engaged in a substantial discussion of the possibility of a fixed point, a centre from which interpretation can be made. The most obvious aspect of this is the Foucault Pendulum itself. An experiment to demonstrate the rotation of the earth, the Pendulum appears to move in its plane of oscillation as the earth moves beneath it. Seeing the Pendulum in the Conservatoire, Casaubon says:

ruotavamo sotto il Pendolo che in realtà non cambiava mai la direzione del proprio piano, perché lassù, da dove esso pendeva, e lungo l'infinito prolungamento ideale del filo, in alto verso le più lontane galassie, stava, immobile per l'eternità, il Punto Fermo.

we were rotating beneath the Pendulum, whose own plane never changed direction, because up there, along the infinite extrapolation of its wire beyond the choir ceiling, up toward the most distant galaxies, lay the Only Fixed Point in the universe, eternally unmoving.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.10; p.5.

The Pendulum stands as metaphor for the Diabolicals' drive to grasp the occult secret of the world, the true insight from which all other knowledge springs. The irony is that, just as the Diabolicals take literally the mock conspiracy put together by Casaubon and his friends, they also take literally the fixedness of the Pendulum, massing there for the novel's climax in the belief that the secret of the world may be found under its point. The actual status of the Pendulum betrays such a desire for determinate meaning, for it is a fixed point only in as much as the mechanism must be 'fixed', by use of a magnet, in order to work. Furthermore, the pendulum may be fixed wherever you wish. The centre of the universe is determined by your decision as to where to place it. Belbo is able to point out to his friend the manner in which the Pendulum is actually a portable, and hence arbitrary, system of signification:

Veda Casaubon, anche il Pendolo è un falso profeta. Lei lo guarda, crede che sia l'unico punto fermo nel cosmo, ma se lo stacca dalla volta del Conservatoire e va ad appenderlo in un bordello funziona lo stesso.

You see, Casaubon, even the Pendulum is a false prophet. You look at it, you think it's the only fixed point in the cosmos, but if you detach it from the ceiling of the Conservatoire and hang it in a brothel, it works just the same.¹⁸⁰

The image of the Pendulum can then be understood in terms of the process of interpretation, particularly paranoid interpretation. Meaning is like the imaginary point of suspension of the Pendulum: fixed by our gaze. This relation of the metaphor to contemporary interpretation theory is illustrated by the manner in which the novel describes Jacopo Belbo's epiphanic moment of connection to the universe, of which, we are told, the Pendulum stood as a personal symbol. The young Belbo has to play a trumpet salute as the partisans bury their dead at the end of the war:

E questo, il momento in cui aveva gelato lo spazio e il tempo scoccando la sua freccia di Zenone, non era stato un segno, un sintomo, un'allusione, una figura, una segnatura, un enigma: era ciò

¹⁸⁰ *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.190; p.237.

che era e che non stava per niente altro, il momento in cui non c'è più rinvio, e i conti sono pari.

But that moment, in which he froze space and time, shooting his Zeno's arrow, had been no symbol, no sign, symptom, allusion, metaphor, or enigma: it was what it was. It did not stand for anything else. At that moment there was no longer any deferment, and the score was settled.¹⁸¹

Here most of the modern terms for treating the process of interpretation are bundled together and momentarily transcended. Belbo, for an instant, removes himself from the troublesome realm of signs, with its accompanying problems of deferral of meaning, of the arbitrariness of the signifier, from the incorrigible vacillation of the indicator of meaning, represented by the Pendulum. It is, by its nature, not only transitory, but perhaps only comprehensible in retrospect. Belbo's moment of transcendence is to be found embedded within the nostalgic narrative of his lost youth. As we have seen, this is a classic Italian, even Piedmontese, post-war fictional trope. Casaubon's moment of resigned resolution follows a very similar pattern, even to the extent of occurring in the same Piedmontese locality as Belbo's childhood experience. Casaubon, finally understanding Lia's objection to his quest for deep meanings, believes that he can sustain himself by concentrating purely on physical externalities, appealing to the long tradition of the local, pastoral scene as the location of authentic, unmediated experience. Meditating on the tactility of a peach, he clings to the physical through rejection of everything else:

come Belbo nel momento in cui suonava la tromba, quando davo un morso alle pesche capivo il Regno ed ero tutt'uno con lui. Dopo, solo arguzia. [...] Ho capito. La certezza che non vi era nulla da capire, questo dovrebbe essere la mia pace e mio trionfo.

like Belbo when he played the trumpet, when I bit into the peach I understood the Kingdom and was one with it. The rest is only cleverness. [...] I have understood. And the certainty that there is nothing to understand should be my peace, my triumph.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.502; p.633.

¹⁸² *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.508; p.640-1.

This conclusion is 'an extraordinary ending for a novel written by one of the world's authorities on semiotics', according to Peter Bondanella.

It paradoxically praises a moment in which things represent, signify, symbolize, stand for, or allude to nothing but themselves -- in short, a state of grace in which there is absolutely no need for semiotics! It would be an edenic moment in which comprehension and apprehension would coincide completely and ideally.¹⁸³

Bondanella is correct in identifying the character of the moment, but his surprise perhaps stems from the mistake of removing the passage from its immediate novelistic context, and treating it as though it were somehow a theoretical stance being adopted by Eco the semiotician.¹⁸⁴ The fact is that this is not someone falsely conjuring up an Edenic moment of epiphany in the real world. Eco's academic work recognises the impossibility of this, but we can see the recognition of it in the novels themselves. The ironisation, the nervous undermining of claims to certainty, and the projection of certain local forms of authority which are then obscured in the novel (such as Lia) all demonstrate an awareness of the liminal placing of fiction with regard to the real world. The ontological uncertainty prompted by the author's autobiographical and textual intrusion (with the epigraph on Belbo and the Pendulum) emphasises both the relationship to, and difference from, principles of validity in the real world. Eco seems to try out, to create, to play with certainties that he knows are, in reality, uncertainties.

When presenting his first novel to the public for the first time, Eco wrote on the dust-jacket about himself that 'if he has written a novel, it is because he has discovered, on reaching maturity, that those things about which we cannot theorize, we must narrate'.¹⁸⁵ This pseudo-Wittgensteinian line, which Eco has a tendency to repeat in interview, is often taken to imply that Eco's fiction is in some sense an

¹⁸³ Bondanella, p.152.

¹⁸⁴ For Bondanella, *Foucault's Pendulum* is 'an exaltation of the philosophical potential of fiction' (Bondanella, p.153). He reads the final scene as symbolizing humankind's tragic entrapment within a field of bewildering and contradictory signs.

¹⁸⁵ Translated by Walter E. Stephens, in 'Ec[h]o in Fabula', 51. Pischedda asserts that the text was, as it appears to be, written by Eco himself. See Bruno Pischedda, *Come leggere "Il nome della rosa" di Umberto Eco*, p.32.

extension of his semiotic work beyond the limits of what can be said in a philosophical tract. I suspect that Eco is here really referring to the issue of legitimacy. He cannot theorize about sensations and fantasies, like the nostalgia for a world where there is no semiotic drift and things are naturally, perfectly themselves, because he has already rejected them. However, fiction is fiction, not reality, and so those false certainties that Eco has aggressively ruled out for the real world have a chance to find a niche in his fictional worlds, where they take on an liminal existence. They are liminal both in the sense that they are marginal structures of knowledge in the first place, and in that they are forced to occupy marginal positions in the narrative.

Conclusion

The Name of the Rose used the form of a detective fiction to explore the nature and limits of abductive reasoning, the characteristic logical mode of the genre. *Foucault's Pendulum* takes later twentieth-century models of fiction of detection as the basis from which to explore the consequences of an unashamedly paranoid use of abductive logic. That is to say, the novel's Diabolicals represent an extreme belief in the principle *adequatio rei et intellectus*, the conviction that the interpretive structure perceived by the mind corresponds to reality. Conveniently for Eco, this can be taken as a mode of radical relativism that he sees operating within some post-structuralist thought, and against which he has elsewhere argued.

This paranoid position is modified in two different ways by Agliè, on the one hand, and the Editors, on the other. Agliè, whose pervasive ironies betray a desire to believe everything simultaneously, represents a form of post-structuralist immoderacy of interpretation, whereby any reading is useful to the extent that it is interesting. The Editors, by contrast, seem to believe in little, but are driven by the will to believe in something. With no legitimate fixed point of meaning available to them, they allow themselves to be progressively seduced by the pleasures of creative activity, under the disguise of ironic play. The novel equates belief in nothing (infinite irony) with both Agliè's belief in everything and the Editors' belief in anything.

Foucault's Pendulum presents a recognisably post-structuralist world inasmuch as the dominant motif is the Foucault Pendulum, which conjures an arbitrary centre of meaning. This is the absent centre around which the novel's various fantasies of meaning -- both occult and naïvely Edenic -- are spun. This structure, the secret which is that there is no secret, is also the MacGuffin structure of the twentieth-century thriller, so prominent in Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*. At the same time that the novel accepts the lack of a centre, it finds its interest in the narration of the marginal, the esoteric, the damned. Its structure works on its readership's acceptance of a post-structuralist arbitrariness of interpretation, while at the same time offering essentially paranoid interpretation as its entertainment. In this it mirrors detective fiction's adoption of a consolatory structure that finally imposes law and order, but only after the disruptive pleasures of crime have been explored for their narrative enjoyment.

Foucault's Pendulum is the novel most expressive of Eco's own autobiography and historical moment, and at the same time the richest in terms of its play with contemporary forms and ideas. Before making its idiomatically Piedmontese return to a childhood landscape redolent of prelapsarian innocence, the novel toys with cinematic and detective fictional tropes, as well as generating other metaphors, aside from the Pendulum, which there has been no room here to consider. The notion of a deep structure to the world is largely explored through the novel's play with ideas of the subterranean and the underworld.¹⁸⁶ Alfred Korzybski's comment that 'a map is not the territory' is used to examine the idea of transposing one's idea of the world back onto the world.¹⁸⁷ Finally, the novel plays with the Hermetic formulation examined by Borges: 'God is an intelligible sphere, whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere'.¹⁸⁸ Aside from its relationship to the interpretive

¹⁸⁶ We may see a similar play in much twentieth-century fiction, including Greene's *The Third Man* and, most recently, Don DeLillo's *Underworld* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997).

¹⁸⁷ Alfred Korzybski, *Science and Sanity*, (1933); fourth edition, The International Non-Aristotelian Library, 1958, II, 4, p.58, as quoted in *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.360; p.456.

¹⁸⁸ Jorge Luis Borges, 'The Fearful Sphere of Pascal', in *Labyrinths*, pp.224-7, p.225.

relativism which is under examination, the centreless sphere has also been adopted by Paul Auster as a description of the detective novel:

Everything becomes essence; the center of the book shifts with each event that propels it forward. The center, then, is everywhere, and no circumference can be drawn until the book has come to its end.¹⁸⁹

Eco's own version of this metaphor displays both his concern for detective fiction and his enjoyment of improbable juxtaposition, as well as his close attention to Borges. 'The universe is peeled like an onion, and an onion is all peel', concludes Casaubon. 'Let us imagine an infinite onion, which has its centre everywhere and its circumference nowhere'.¹⁹⁰ This paradoxical image appropriately captures the sleight of hand by which Eco attempts to encapsulate a structure that ought to be self-collapsing. The adoption of the detective story format allows him to present a form with no centre, through the presentation of the process of discovering that there is no centre.

¹⁸⁹ Paul Auster, *City of Glass* (New York: Sun and Moon, 1985), in *The New York Trilogy* (London: Penguin, 1990), p.9.

¹⁹⁰ 'si sbuccia l'universo come una cipolla, e una cipolla è tutta buccia, immaginiamoci una cipolla infinita, che abbia il centro da ogni parte e la circonferenza in nessun luogo', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.492; p.621.

CHAPTER FOUR

Endless Speculation in *The Island of the Day Before*

Introduction

Eco's third novel, *L'isola del giorno prima*, was finally published in 1994, eight years after *Foucault's Pendulum*, with the English translation appearing the next year. Reviewers found some difficulty in establishing a consensus on the novel, after the first two novels had been easily slotted into the journalistic categories of, respectively, the surprise bestseller and the troublesome follow-up. Eco had been cut down to size by some reviewers of *Foucault's Pendulum* who clearly saw themselves as Nemesis to his hubristic debut. This left *The Island of the Day Before* to be judged more squarely on its own merits.¹ It also meant that there was not such a readily available hook upon which to hang one's opinion. Most anglophone reviewers took the opportunity to refer to Eco's prodigious output of non-fiction, a significant proportion of which never surfaces outside Italy. Alongside Eco's bi-weekly column for *L'Espresso*, the most common point of reference was Eco's contribution to the 'Making of Europe' series, *Ricerca della lingua perfetta nella cultura europea*, published in 1993, but finally appearing in English as *The Search for the Perfect Language* in 1995, almost simultaneously with the novel. The coincidence of publication was reinforced by a certain amount of shared ground, with the novel describing some of the same quixotic quests for universal systems as are covered in the pages of the historical work.

The comparison did not always operate to the benefit of the novel. One reviewer, Noel Malcolm, relieved at the absence of Eco's postmodernist narrative devices in *The Search for the Perfect Language*, declared that 'unlike Eco's latest novel, it is

¹ Eco himself contrasts the measured reception of his third novel to the 'unnatural expectation' that surrounded *Foucault's Pendulum*. '*The Island of the Day Before*', he said in 1995, 'is having a natural life. It started with several reviews, some of them very positive, some of them very negative. And, in the event, it has sold around 500,000 copies in the first year, which isn't bad' (Umberto Eco in interview with John Hooper, *Guardian*, 30 Sept 1995, Section 2, p.27).

a work that will not only fascinate, but also inform and endure'.² Malcolm indicated a frustration with a novel that continually promised action, but delivered mainly speculation. 'The story peters out inconsequentially,' he complained, 'and the philosophical discussions take over the book, flourishing like ivy on a ruined building'.³

It is not as though the novel itself is devoid of action or movement. The main character, Roberto della Griva, finds himself shipwrecked, only to wash up against a deserted ship, the *Daphne*, anchored somewhere in the Pacific. He gradually discovers a series of wonders on board -- telescopes, clocks, exotic birds and plants, finally an eccentric Jesuit, Father Caspar, who is in search of the 180° of longitude. It being 1643, this search is futile. It would be more than a century until there was a reliable means of measuring longitude, which would come eventually in the form of John Harrison's maritime chronometer.⁴ Similarly futile are Roberto's attempts to leave the ship and reach the nearby island. The island increasingly promises respite, amazement, even a form of return to the past, at the same time as the possible means of reaching it are exhausted. Instead of physical movement, Roberto

² Noel Malcolm, 'When a philosopher loses the plot...', *Sunday Telegraph*, 1 Oct 1995, Books, p.15.

³ Malcolm, p.15.

⁴ It is instructive to compare the mixed fortunes of *The Island of the Day Before* with the extraordinary success of Dava Sobel's journalistic account of Harrison and the longitude problem, both of which make mention of Galileo and Digby's Powder of Sympathy. Sobel's little book, *Longitude: The True Story of a Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Puzzle of His Time* (London: Fourth Estate, 1996) employs a brisk and unfussy discourse. It demonstrates not only a continuing public interest in narratives of discovery, but also, given that most of the solutions it describes were inadequate or ludicrous, a willingness to attend to narratives of failure. If nothing else, the success of Sobel's account shows that the subject matter it shares with *The Island of the Day Before* is not intrinsically off-putting to a general readership.

Digby's Powder of Sympathy will be examined later in this chapter. Galileo had hoped that his observations of eclipses of Jupiter's moons would enable sailors to establish longitude, although the use of his elaborate observational headgear, the *celatone*, proved impractical at sea. Father Caspar uses a version of Galileo's device in Chapter Twenty-Three of the novel. On Galileo and longitude, see Silvio A. Bedini, *The Pulse of Time: Galileo Galilei, the Determination of Longitude, and the Pendulum Clock* (Florence: Biblioteca di Nincius, 1991). On the longitude problem itself, see J.E.D. Williams, *From Sails to Satellites: The Origin and Development of Navigational Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

travels into his past, losing himself in memories of his youth. These include his presence at the siege of Casale, where he falls in love with a peasant girl, and is shown a machine for generating metaphors. We are also shown his introduction into the fashionable salons of Paris, where he falls in love again, and the devious means by which he was forced to sail on the *Amaryllis* as a spy on a seaborne experiment in determining longitude. With Father Caspar, his only companion, apparently drowned, Roberto constructs fantastic alternatives to his predicament that, as they become increasingly improbable, exert an increasing dominion over him. Finally, having persuaded himself that he can suspend time by remaining on what he believes to be the 180° meridian (which would eventually be adopted as the international date line), Roberto casts himself adrift on a plank. This leaves the narrator, who is presented as editing Roberto's letters and diary, with the difficult task of explaining how these documents could have survived to the present day.

If the narration of these events strikes the reader, as it did many reviewers, as somewhat turgid and pedestrian, then this is largely due to the frustrating indolence of Roberto della Griva, and the mediation of the narrative through the distancing voice of the narrator, who appears more concerned with Ecovian problems of interpretation than with dramatic tension. Gilbert Adair places the blame with Eco himself, expressing surprise that 'he often botches those moments of suspense and revelation that any other novelist would carry off without a hitch'.⁵ Adair is correct in identifying the treatment of suspense as being of great significance in the novel, but I will argue that Eco's frustration of the normal narrative movements of suspense and *dénouement* is deliberate. Even if it is not necessarily pleasing to the reader, it is central to an understanding of the novel.

Frustration with the inadequacy of the novel's action also indicates one respect in which *The Island of the Day Before* differs from its predecessors. *The Name of the Rose* fulfilled the formal demands of the detective story whilst critically examining its generic configurations (satisfying both 'low' and 'high' cultural demands), and *Foucault's Pendulum* performed much the same trick with the conspiracy thriller. In each case, the balance was maintained with respect to a dominant twentieth century genre. By contrast, although *The Island of the Day*

⁵ Gilbert Adair, 'Marooned in a sea of stories', *Sunday Times*, 1 Oct 1995, Books, p.12.

Before to some extent performs the same balancing act, it is with respect to a form of adventure story, specifically the shipwreck narrative, that is relatively unfashionable. Correspondingly, for the general reader, the formal satisfactions on offer are faint, and the *frisson* achieved by challenging these is even fainter.

In short, *The Island of the Day Before* is a *Robinson Crusoe* for a postmodern audience (which may turn out to be different to its being a postmodern *Robinson Crusoe*).⁶ This makes sense of its long philosophical and theological digressions, which follow the bias in Defoe's novel to the contemplative, but which may be too arid for many contemporary readers.⁷ At the same time, however, Eco substitutes Defoe's *homo oeconomicus* with a frustrated and frustrating *homo uneconomicus*. Nobody could be further from the intellectually adept and worldly William of Baskerville than Roberto della Griva, and nothing could seem further from the structure of the detective story than this unpragmatic, unsuccessful Robinson Crusoe.

Of course, just like *The Name of the Rose* and *Foucault's Pendulum*, *The Island of the Day Before* is really a novel of detection. It certainly addresses more directly than either of the other novels the 'fundamental question of philosophy' that Eco playfully equated with the detective novel: 'who is guilty?'⁸ Roberto and Caspar's theological debates, including the question of the origin of the waters of the Flood, as well as Roberto's nightmare of a laughing deity, mean that this criterion is adequately fulfilled.⁹ But this is a very partial vision of the process of detection. At

⁶ Eco indicates that Defoe's hero was a seminal influence on the construction of the novel. 'Shipwrecked on a desert island -- that was my first idea', he told John Hooper. 'Then I thought: "Wasn't there a certain Robinson Crusoe who was also shipwrecked?" How about if I had my hero shipwrecked on a ship and unable to reach the desert island? That would be a great symbol -- or allegory -- of desire, of everything we wished for in our lives and didn't get' (Interview with John Hooper, *Guardian*, 30 Sept 1995, Section 2, p.27).

⁷ By contrast, Michel Tournier's first novel manages an effective post-colonial version of *Robinson Crusoe* by having the Crusoe figure learn to surrender his claims to civilization, and adopt the lifestyle of the colonised figure, Friday. Michel Tournier, *Vendredi, ou les limbes du Pacifique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), translated by Norman Denny as *Friday, or the Other Island* (London: Collins, 1969).

⁸ *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, p.54.

⁹ Caspar's theory of the Flood, and the derivation of its water from the other side of the 180° meridian, is elaborated in Chapter Twenty-One. Roberto fantasises that Caspar returns to describe a vision of a laughing God (p.420; p.454).

base it is epistemological inquiry. 'The detective genre is a little like the quest narrative', Eco argues elsewhere, 'which is the same in philosophy, in theology or in the sciences'.¹⁰ *The Island of the Day Before*, in that it centres on the pursuit of philosophical, theological and scientific truths, precisely fits this categorisation.

Eco's novel is characterised by endless speculation about the nature of reality, speculation that is encouraged by the wealth of new scientific devices available. However, the speculations notably tend to be incorrect. If Eco defended anachronistic discoveries and reasoning in *The Name of the Rose* with the claim that historical figures could have constructed the right ideas, here he explores the opposite. Much of the novel explores ideas to which history has been unkind, such as the Powder of Sympathy, at the only moment in time when they were considered viable.

The narrative of failure includes Roberto's attempts at swimming, the drowning of Father Caspar, and the failure to identify the island. In the latter case the failure extends to the level of the narration, with the narrator equally unable to pin down the location of the island. Given Eco's reputation as a semiotician in the post-structuralist mode, it is tempting to understand this as an illustration of the ungrounded nature of interpretation, particularly as the location of the island seems not just unknown, but in some sense impossible. This, however, sits uneasily with the sense developed throughout the novel that the interpretive inadequacies rest ultimately with Roberto himself. As far as Roberto is concerned, whenever decisive action is required, he finds excuses to defer, dally, to duck out. In the place of discovery, of testing the situation, he procrastinates and fantasises possible outcomes, alternate possible worlds that change or erase the problem.

Eco's shipwrecked sailor lacks the bluff sturdiness of Defoe's Crusoe, even though they share a belief in God. As with Chesterton's Father Brown, Crusoe's speculations are backed by an authorial belief in his interpretive Structure. His trust in the capability of his practical skills to civilize is based on the assumed presence of the transcendental signifier, God. Crusoe is humble, orthodox, not given to heterodox speculation. Roberto's doubtful mind, by contrast, is full of the intellectual

¹⁰ 'Le modèle policier est un peu le modèle de la quête, qui est le même en philosophie, en théologie ou dans les sciences', Umberto Eco, introduction to 'Conjecturer: D'Aristote à Sherlock Holmes' [a translation of Eco's contribution to *The Sign of Three*], *Magazine littéraire* 241 (April 1987), 32-41, 32, my translation.

probing and playing of Parisian *précieuses*. There is nothing to prevent him from crossing the thin boundaries into heresy. Even the presence of the Jesuit Father Caspar cannot help, because Caspar is experiencing exactly the same problem.

In all respects, the companionship of Father Caspar is a mixed blessing for Roberto. Caspar's eccentricities and absurd theological speculations on the Flood merely encourage Roberto to drift further into his own fantastic imaginings. By the time that Caspar drowns in his submersible walking apparatus, Roberto is isolated again, and no nearer the island. Of course, the Italian 'isola' in the novel's title carries the sense of desolation and loneliness more usefully than the English 'island'. At the same time, however, the intertextual resonance of John Donne's 'A Valediction forbidding mourning' in the text (the final three stanzas of which appear in Chapter Sixteen of the novel) may well bring to mind Donne's famous use of the island as metaphor for man:

No man is an *Iland*, intire of itselfe; every man is a peece of the *Continent*, a part of the *maine*; [...] Any Mans *death* diminishes *me*, because I am involved in *Mankinde*.¹¹

Roberto, who increasingly identifies the island with his life, is the sorry counter-argument to Donne's analogy. Roberto is, in a sense, an island, in his physical and mental isolation. He is dangerously uninvolved in mankind. It is this isolation that enforces the impossibility of confirming anything that he speculates. Even when he is in conversation with Caspar, Roberto keeps silent about his wilder speculations, out of an awareness that they may seem heretical to the Jesuit. However, we, the readers, are aware (and assisted in this by the intrusive narrator armed with twentieth century data) that Roberto's speculations are wrong on just about every count.

¹¹ John Donne, *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* (1624), Meditation 17, in John Donne, *Selected Prose*, edited with an introduction and notes by Neil Rhodes (London: Penguin, 1987), p.126.

Roberto has the opportunity to act as a good, abductive detective in discovering what the situation aboard the *Daphne* is. In nearly every instance, however, he behaves as a bad detective. He speculates before establishing the details, concerns himself with the range of possibilities before he has sought out physical 'hooks' upon which to hang them, the '*clous*' that Dupin would seek.¹²

The examination of the ship begins after Roberto has already spent a day on board, though the delay is excused by the necessity of resting. By now sure that nobody else can be on board (rationalising, incorrectly, that anyone on board would have responded to his presence), Roberto exhibits a telling reaction to the prospect of discovering the truth about the ship's deserted state. The narrator tells us that Roberto fears locating the evidence required to understand such an unusual state of affairs. He fears that 'he might find corpses, or some sign that explained their absence'.¹³ He finds no corpses, nor anything much else to explain why the *Daphne* has been abandoned. He is presented with a mystery akin to that of the famously abandoned ship, the *Marie Céleste*.

Upon finding the ship's log, Roberto can only read the Latin phrase '*pestis, quae dicitur bubonica*' and the word '*rottenest*'.¹⁴ His conclusion from these clues is a reasonable one. He correctly realises that the log is referring to the bubonic plague. He puts this together with the guess that *rottenest* means 'rat's nest', to reach the conclusion that the crew were killed by plague carried by rats. Reasonable though this guess is, we later discover that it is incorrect. The crew mistook a mosquito bite suffered by Father Caspar for a plague buboe, and fled the ship. Roberto discovers this only when he locates Caspar, at which point *rottenest* also receives an

¹² John T. Irwin makes great play from the homonymity of 'clue', and the French *clou* (nail) with respect to 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue'. The solution to the puzzle of the locked room hangs on the discovery of a broken nail, or *clou*, in the window, that means that, despite appearances, it can be opened and closed. See John T. Irwin, 'A Clew to a Clue: Locked Rooms and Labyrinths in Poe and Borges', *Raritan* 10:4 (1991), 40-57.

¹³ 'avrebbe potuto trovar dei cadaveri, qualche segno che giustificasse quell'assenza', *The Island of the Day Before*, p.10; p.7.

¹⁴ *The Island of the Day Before*, p.13; p.10 and p.14; p.11.

explanation. The presence on board of a stuffed Quokka, a type of marsupial that Roberto mistakes for a giant rat and throws overboard, leads the narrator to conclude that the *Daphne* must have travelled via the home of the Quokka, Rottenest Island, off the Western coast of Australia.

The clues found by Roberto in the ship's log are therefore adequately explained. The desertion of the *Daphne*, the basic situation of the novel, is accounted for. A question remains, however, regarding the necessity of the *rottenest* clue, and the elaborate explanation it requires, including the requirement that the *Daphne* 'circumnavigate at least half of Australia without ever seeing it'.¹⁵ Of course, as the narrator is at pains to point out, this fits the overall theme of near-misses and spectacular failures, citing the similar experience of Abel Tasman finding Tasmania but not mainland Australia. However, the tortuously explained *rottenest* has little narrative justification, and so one must look for other reasons for its inclusion. The confusion between *rottenest* as a proper noun and an ordinary one is certainly a typical Ecovian interpretive ploy, recalling the more profound and narratorially significant confusion over the word *quatuor* as transparent signifier, or as an object in itself in *The Name of the Rose*.

Furthermore, Caspar is finally located in a secret cubby-hole that Roberto eventually locates, after several false starts, through analysis of the plan of the ship (providing yet another unflattering comparison to William of Baskerville's powers of detection, by which he is able to calculate from the outside the plan of the library). In fact, Roberto's attempts to map space recall the absolute division between intellectual and physical labour portrayed in Calvino's 'Il Conte di Montecristo'. The space is described as 'una topaia', which William Weaver translates, presumably with authorial approval, as 'a rat's nest'.¹⁶ Hence, *rottenest* serves as an oblique clue to the location of Caspar, the Other whose existence Roberto has long suspected. As such, it was available to Roberto as a false clue that would nevertheless have unlocked the mystery correctly, as happened to William of Baskerville in *The Name of the Rose*. The missed clue is then both a typically self-indulgent allusion by Eco to the interpretive structure of his first novel, and an

¹⁵ 'circumnavigar l'Australia almeno per due quarti senza mai vederla', *The Island of the Day Before*, p.226-7; p.244.

¹⁶ *The Island of the Day Before*, p.223; p.240.

indication that it will not be followed here. Roberto is not even a good enough detective to get it wrong, it seems.

There is more, however. Provoked by the appearance of the word *rottenest* in the ship's log, Roberto is on the lookout for rats. The word he uses is 'topo', but the introduction of the Dutch *rottenest* suggests the alternative term, *ratto*. Indeed, Roberto's reading of *rottenest* appears to depend on this suggestion. The whole messy sequence of interpretations pivots on the term *ratto*, which can also carry the sense of 'abduction'. Thus, the meandering series of failed and rather pointless interpretive guesses is capped by a typically Ecovian in-joke. Roberto's characteristic trouble with abductive guesses is illustrated by a multilingual reference to Peirce's term for the mental exercise -- abduction.

Roberto is continually forced to attempt abductive interpretations. For instance, he sees that the birds have been fed and water has been collected, which leads him to formulate his theory that there is an intruder on board. However, Roberto is unable to stop at the pragmatic interpretation of events that postulates an intruder. Instead, he pursues the paranoid reading that identifies the intruder as someone known to him, forgetting that it is he who is the real intruder, and there is no logical reason to suppose any relationship to anyone on board the *Daphne*.

There is a conflict in Roberto between his solipsistic tendency of his thoughts to spiral in towards his preformed ideas and the more robust rationalism that we recognise in Robinson Crusoe. The obvious equation of Roberto's shipwreck 'island', the *Daphne*, with the island upon which Robinson Crusoe is stranded becomes reinforced when Roberto's suspicions of an intruder are given material foundation. Roberto's initial fears that the *Daphne* is inhabited by another are qualified by the awareness that he is more than capable of inventing evidence of a non-existent shadow of himself, as in the case of his 'brother' or *doppelgänger*, Ferrante.¹⁷ Roberto does have moments of lucidity where he is able to assess possible objections to his ideas, even to the extent of realising that the intruder could be the product of his own mind. Encouraged by thoughts of the combinatory machine

¹⁷ Clearly, the introduction of the *doppelgänger* motif is proper to the novel as a baroque construction, but it also carries significant echoes of Melville and Joseph Conrad, particularly the latter's 'The Secret Sharer', in *Twixt Land and Sea: Tales* (London: Dent, 1912).

of Padre Emanuele, Roberto considers that events might be explained by a confluence of coincidences, so that 'afraid of having violated another's sanctum,' he has 'constructed another self who roams beneath the same decks'.¹⁸ Having got this far, however, Roberto fails to distinguish between the *doppelgänger* theory and the theory of the intruder *per se*, which means that when he does find unequivocal evidence of another, he believes that it is Ferrante.

When Roberto does eventually bring himself to explore the *Daphne*, 'in the hold, among puddles of water and scraps of stored food, he discovered the print of a foot'.¹⁹ The discovery fundamentally alters Roberto's situation, symbolically ending his isolation, offering a route back from solipsistic speculation to a kind of society, even of a very limited sort. However, the revelation, and additionally the manner in which this moment of high drama is almost thrown away with a casual revelation, emphatically echoes the manner in which the most famous moment in *Robinson Crusoe* is sprung upon the unprepared reader:

It happen'd one Day about Noon going towards my Boat, I was exceedingly surpriz'd with the Print of a Man's naked Foot on the Shore, which was very plain to be seen in the Sand.²⁰

Roberto's find carries the shadow of Crusoe's surprising discovery, but Eco is careful to announce where the difference between the two lies. Crusoe, for all of his years of isolation, is resolutely centred by his belief in God, rather like Chesterton's Father Brown, and never strays too far into error because he preserves a sense of his own fallibility. As his first response, after taking refuge in the initial rush of fear, Crusoe considers that his discovery could be 'all a Delusion; that it was nothing else but my own Foot, and why might not I come that way from the Boat, as well as I

¹⁸ 'timoroso di aver violato un altrui sacrario, ho costruito un altro me stesso che si aggira sotto gli stessi ponti', *The Island of the Day Before*, p.94; p.99.

¹⁹ 'proprio nella stiva, tra macchie di acqua e detriti del cibo stivato, aveva scorto l'impronta di un piede', *The Island of the Day Before*, p.187; p.200.

²⁰ Daniel Defoe, *The Life and Strange and Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (London: William Taylor, 1719), cited version edited with an introduction and notes by J. Donald Crowley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), p.153.

was going that way to the Boat'.²¹ In the light of this, he returns to the beach and, like a good scientist, tests his hypothesis. It is only when he measures his own foot against the print and finds an unmistakable difference in size that he accepts the reality of the presence of another on his island. Crusoe's almost Enlightenment sensibility, informed by the spirit of scientific inquiry, is invoked by Eco to highlight its absence in Roberto's thoughts. Roberto fulfils the Popperian definition of pseudo-scientific inquiry, as he looks not for a genuine test, but for a verification of what he has already come to believe. 'Convinced now that the Intruder existed,' we are told, 'Roberto did not think that in all this coming and going he could have left the print himself'.²²

The effect is that the ontological question resonating in Defoe's text -- whether Crusoe can accept the reality of another beside himself -- is effaced in *The Island of the Day Before*, to be replaced with the epistemological question that follows -- who is the Other? This effacement is replicated in the way that Defoe's footprint has been gradually overprinted by the more recent and gothic footprints offered by the detective tradition. The modern reader finds in the presence of such a mark *prima facie* evidence of not simply a person, but a criminal, used as we are to footprints in the flowerbeds, the multitudes of shoe types identified by the taxonomic mind of Sherlock Holmes, and most dramatically of all, those famous footprints found around Baskerville Hall.

There is, in fact, a certain amount of doggedly Sherlockian thinking exhibited in *The Island of the Day Before*. Roberto's conception of his on-board adversary is at least partially as a supernatural being, *doppelgänger* or not. Intertextual support for this is not available in *Robinson Crusoe*. Such support comes instead from Conan Doyle's melodramatic chapter-ending early in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. 'Mr Holmes,' whispers Dr Mortimer, 'they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!'²³

²¹ *Robinson Crusoe*, p.158.

²² 'Sicuro ormai che l'Intruso si fosse, non pensò che, dopo tanti andirivieni, l'impronta poteva averla lasciata lui stesso', *The Island of the Day Before*, p.187; p.200. In Michel Tournier's *Vendredi*, Robinson realises that the footprint he finds is in fact his own.

²³ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, (London: George Newnes, 1902), edition cited (London: Leopard, 1996), p.32.

This, the most famous of all the Holmes tales, plays off the substantial expectation of the supernatural that it generates. Indeed, this is one reason why it is highlighted in the name of William of Baskerville, who fails to see how his interpretation of events in the abbey succumbs to the prevailing apocalyptic superstition. However, at least William is able to operate effectively through a rigorous differentiation between the contingent limitations of his knowledge and absolute judgements on the nature of his world -- in other words, between epistemological and ontological problems. Roberto appears unable even to disentangle these aspects of his predicament, leading to logical errors such as the one he makes over the identity of the intruder.

The Powder of Sympathy

Roberto, having been blackmailed into sailing on the *Amaryllis* as a spy for Cardinal Mazarin, finally discovers the secret of Dr. Byrd. Byrd is carrying out the very experiment on determining longitude that would be described in an English pamphlet of 1684. It depends upon a use of the Powder of Sympathy, or weapon salve, which was believed to induce an effect at a distance. Byrd has had the dog injured by a weapon, which was then treated with weapon salve. This establishes an analogic relationship between the weapon and the wound, of precisely the type criticised by Eco in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* as 'Hermetic semiosis'. Thus, if the weapon is placed in fire, the dog is supposed to feel heat in its wound. Making the large assumption that this effect is instantaneous, which does not follow from the explanation given to Roberto by d'Igby, then the effect can be used to indicate time.²⁴ With a colleague in London holding the weapon to a fire at midday,

²⁴ D'Igby's explanation of the effect of the Powder of Sympathy, given in Chapter Sixteen, relies upon the dispersal of atoms through the air, which are attracted to their original source. Byrd is carefully presented as believing a bastardised version of the theory. When Roberto challenges Byrd with examples of analogous action that, as we will see later in this section, d'Igby had dismissed as old wives' tales, Byrd readily accepts them as true. See *The Island of the Day Before*, p.205, p.220.

Byrd and his assistant believe that they can receive the correct time by observing when the dog is in pain.

To his credit, as he secretly observes the experiment, it does not take Roberto long to see its flaws. In the first place, there is no particular reason to believe that the dog is responding to any other stimulus beyond its immediate circumstances. 'Perhaps those villains believed they were receiving a message from far away,' Roberto reasons, 'while on the contrary the dog suffered or experienced relief as the waves alternately jarred or lulled him'.²⁵ He also suspects that the dog may be influenced by unconscious signals given out by Byrd in his anxiety that the experiment be a success. The irony is that Roberto can observe in others the interpretive faults that he repeatedly fails to notice in himself.

Whereas Sherlock Holmes found meaning in the absence of signs from a dog (in 'Silver Blaze'), Roberto realises that the signs from this dog are meaningless. That is to say, the presence of other viable hypotheses that could account for the signs makes them meaningless for the purposes of the experiment. Byrd's experiment is bad science because there is no means of verifying the observation. In due course we will examine in more detail the novel's view of the new science. At this point, however, we can determine exactly where Roberto fits with regard to the model detectives with which Eco has been operating throughout his fiction.

Detection: Roberto as Sick Spinozist

Though in situation Roberto resembles so closely Robinson Crusoe or Lemuel Gulliver, temperamentally and semiotically he resembles more closely the Golden Age detectives satirized in *Six Problems for Don Isidro Parodi*. The Don sits in his jail cell, drinking *maté*, while murder mysteries are recounted to him at second hand. Parodi parodies Nero Wolfe, 'to whom Archie Goodwin brings information but who never budges from his house', and who is so frequently mentioned by Eco.²⁶ Like

²⁵ 'Forse quei malvagi credevano di ricevere un messaggio da lontano, e invece il cane soffriva e provava sollievo a seconda che le ondate lo disturbassero o lo cullassero', *The Island of the Day Before*, p.211, p.225.

²⁶ *The Limits of Interpretation*, pp.152-3.

both of them, instead of pressing on with the task of exploring the reduced limits of his world on the *Daphne*, Roberto sits in his room and waits, thinks, hypothesises, behaving like Calvino's Dantès, or the Victorian amateur detectives who rely on brain-power rather than leg-work.

Walter Benjamin makes a useful comparison of the amateur detective to the tradition of the *flâneur*, the strolling observer, idling along the city streets and watching the world go by.²⁷ Of course, the detective, amateur or professional, has a purpose to his investigations, but we can nevertheless think of instances of Dupin, Holmes, Detective Inspector Bucket from Dickens' *Bleak House*, and especially George Simenon's Maigret, behaving as *flâneurs*. Benjamin finds the earliest instance of the detective as *flâneur* in Poe's 'The Man of the Crowd', but we might also think of Dupin, who, at an originary point of the detective tradition, embodies two principles that will in time separate out.

First, in the opening scene of 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', Dupin wanders the streets late at night, like the nameless narrator of 'The Man of the Crowd', with no particular destination in mind. He observes Paris in a manner that will become crystallised by Poe's admirer, Baudelaire. This scene, while it initially caught our attention as a piece of outrageous mind-reading of the type familiar through Sherlock Holmes, is actually an exercise in *flâneurisme*. Even the 'mind-reading' is as much a reading of the city as of the narrator's mind, encompassing detail such as road-construction and a locally famous actor. Of course, as John Rignall points out, this emphasis on the observation of external clues to character is 'a version of the classic metonymic procedure of realism, which reads external phenomena as clues to the inner life'.²⁸ Dupin can 'read' his friend because he knows that they are both products of that city, and he can read the city.

This element of the detective tradition, found also in Sherlock and Mycroft Holmes' competitive *flâneurisme* as they identify passers-by through the window of the Diogenes Club, will eventually emerge as the defining characteristic of the

²⁷ 'the flâneur is thus turned into an unwilling detective', Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, translated by Harry Zohn (London: Verso, 1983), p.40.

²⁸ John Rignall, 'From City Streets to Country Houses: The Detective as *Flâneur*', in *The Art of Murder: New Essays on Detective Fiction*, edited by H. Gustav Klaus and Stephen Knight (Tübingen: Stauffenberg Verlag, 1998), p.69.

American detective tradition, the hard-boiled story. The concepts of the stake-out, of keeping one's eyes peeled and of pounding the city streets are the generic characteristics of the hard-boiled detective from Chandler onwards. It is no accident that detectives such as Chandler's Marlowe are casually known as 'gumshoes', a reference to the fact that they spend most of their time walking.

At the same time that Dupin and his narrator friend are exhibiting the characteristics of *flâneurs*, they nevertheless spend most of their time locked away, far from the lives and events in which Dupin professes interest. 'Our seclusion was perfect,' says the narrator, 'we admitted no visitors'.²⁹ This is the model for the tradition of detective as magician, as pure mind able to understand the world at second hand, from descriptions and observations made at a distance, relying only on signs of signs.

This principle is made abundantly clear in the second Dupin story, 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt'. Here Dupin solves a murder at second hand, the case presented being a thinly fictionalised version of a real American murder investigation.³⁰ The narrative eschews any necessity of having Dupin physically investigate the circumstances of the death. Indeed, he limits himself to developing a hypothetical version of events based on a commentary on the newspaper reports supplied to him on the affair. In fact, in the entire narrative, Dupin does nothing but read and talk, and does not step outside his apartment. An opening footnote on the relation of the fiction to the real crime emphasises the isolation of the detective (whether understood here as the author or Dupin) from the events investigated. 'The "Mystery of Marie Rogêt" was composed at a distance from the scene of the atrocity,' the note runs, 'and with no other means of investigation than the newspapers afforded'.³¹ Of course, in this respect Dupin is mirroring the authorial position as the proffered solution is also intended by Poe to refer to the real murder case, for which he

²⁹ *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, II, p.532.

³⁰ See John Walsh's *Poe the Detective: The Curious Circumstances behind The Mystery of Marie Rogêt* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1968), which argues that the delayed publication of the final instalment was to enable the incorporation of new evidence into the story, making Poe's analysis appear more accurate. For a brief account, see *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, III, 715-722.

³¹ 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt', in *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, III, p.723, n.1.

himself only has newspaper accounts.³² Poe's tactic is an extraordinary, palimpsestic, approach that is suggestive of nothing more than medieval scholarly exegesis, albeit performed here with the intention of undermining the base texts, getting at the reality that allegedly lies beneath them.

The detective of pure mind operates on an extension of the doctrine of *adequatio rei et intellectus*, able to produce from the mind a map of the world vast and detailed enough to encompass reality. All fictional detectives operate by reading signs, but while the gumshoe seeks out signs in the most natural states possible, as close to the object being sought as can be managed, his opposite number has no qualms about the length of the chain of signification. A newspaper report or a verbal account (upon which both Nero Wolfe and Don Isidro Parodi are utterly reliant) is for the detective of pure mind quite as useful as a fingerprint or a footprint. Naturally, the more sophisticated of these detectives will factor in the distortion that mediation through other humans gives to the signs being traced. Nevertheless, all inherently believe that the essential character of the sign itself can be transmitted in a retrievable fashion through a potentially endless succession of interpretations.³³ Such perfect transmittability would, of course, require a perfect match between mind and world, between the map and the territory. This is what Eco identifies in the Don Isidro Parodi stories as 'a profound Spinozist notion that "ordo et connexio rerum idem est ac ordo et connexio idearum"', the order and relationship of things are the same as the order and relationship of their concepts.³⁴

The idea that the processes and logic of the human mind parallel the processes and logic of nature is a strong guarantee of the reliability of *adequatio rei et intellectus*, the adequation of the object and the mind. The significant step is the reversal of terms, from a striving to match one's mind with the complexities of the

³² Walsh argues that Poe was more implicated in the real case than he reveals, and hence produced a deliberately partial account. Even if this is true, however, it does not affect the unusual correspondence between author and detective in this case.

³³ In fact, this is another area where 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' straddles two aspects of the detective tradition that will quickly diverge. In this story, Dupin searches for clues at the scene of the crime. He also dissects newspaper reports, mapping their inaccuracies, as he would in 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt', in order to discover the truth that they obscurely carry.

³⁴ *The Limits of Interpretation*, p.160.

natural world to a belief that the map generated by the mind is naturally formed to be an accurate map of the world. This paranoid reversal is what catches Eco's interest, and he casts it as the pivotal logical structure identified by Borges:

The mechanism of the Don Isidro stories anticipates the fundamental mechanism of many of Borges's later stories, perhaps all of them. I will call this [...] *the mechanism of conjecture in a sick Spinozist universe*.³⁵

Roberto, isolated on the *Daphne*, rapidly succumbs to the temptations of ordering the world as his mind conceives it. His universe is a 'sick Spinozist' one. With a clearly disordered mind, he generates increasingly 'sick' fictional universes as maps of the world from his observations on and off the boat. Roberto's speculations are like detective hypotheses without an application of Ockham's razor. He is perfectly capable of generating imaginative solutions to the problems he observes, but has little interest in or ability for selecting between them on grounds of applicability.

In other words, the interpretive problem of selecting between competing hypotheses is here at issue. C.S. Peirce offers his own version of Ockham's razor. 'Facts cannot be explained by a hypothesis more extraordinary than the facts themselves,' he writes, 'and of various hypotheses the least extraordinary must be accepted'.³⁶ Roberto is not willing to apply either of these delimiting considerations to his hypotheses, preferring the profoundly paranoid option of sustaining those hypotheses that are most meaningful to him, or those that he most fears.

In terms of the *alazon-eiron* pairing applied to Eco's other novels, Roberto is pure *alazon*. He is eager to learn, and generates new speculative interpretations with great fecundity from dreams, coincidences, and correspondence of his own thought processes with external events. The tragedy for Roberto is that he has no capacity as an *eiron*, and no reliable father figure with whom to form an *alazon-eiron* pair. Of the three available father figures -- Roberto's real father, Saint-Savin, and Father Caspar -- the first is an outmoded idealist and the last is perhaps an even less reliable

³⁵ *The Limits of Interpretation*, p.156.

³⁶ C.S. Peirce, Ms. 696, as catalogued by Richard S. Robin, *Annotated Catalogue of the Papers of Charles S. Peirce* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1967).

interpreter than Roberto himself. Saint-Savin, whose cynical view of the siege of Casale educates Roberto in the realities of war, is the only possible candidate for such a role. It is notable that he, like old Pozzo and Father Caspar, dies as Roberto looks on, and before he has had a chance to complete the young man's education. Roberto, with his poorly developed sense of how his world works, is left with no logical device for determining between competing hypotheses.

Of course, *a priori* reasoning is not the only way of selecting between hypotheses. Even Sherlock Holmes realises the importance of testing theories. In 'The Blanched Soldier' Holmes notes that when there are several possible explanations, 'one tries test after test until one or other of them has a convincing amount of support'.³⁷ Although, typically, Holmes does not practice what he preaches, he is here acknowledging the absolute dominance exerted since the mid-seventeenth century on the matter of determining correct interpretation by the methods of science. *The Island of the Day Before* is in large measure an account of the arrival of this dominant methodology, a portrait of the margins of what would become the scientific establishment while it was still itself marginal.

Virtuoso Detection: Natural Philosophy as Abductive Science

Roberto's isolation means, amongst other things, isolation from a community that may verify or criticise his interpretive guesses. Roberto falls between, outside or beyond any available interpretive communities. This might be a problem for a more resolute figure, with a clear sense of his position in the universe, such as Robinson Crusoe. Roberto, however, has no coherent body of beliefs, data and interpretations with which to back up his speculations. He reflects the baroque enthusiasm for developing new interpretations, but displays almost no awareness that such interpretations must eventually be tested.

Reflecting on the collision in the novel of ideas that today inhabit rigorously separated interpretive communities, Rocco Capozzi thinks that it is amusing and

³⁷ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Blanched Soldier', in *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* (London: John Murray, 1927), edition cited (London: Leopard, 1996), p.63.

ironic to see how the English scientist Dr. Byrd uses the magical device of the Powder of Sympathy in an attempt to solve the longitude problem, whereas the Jesuit Father Caspar relies on mechanical devices such as clocks.³⁸ This may indeed strike the modern mind as a reversal, but Eco is simply being faithful to the scientific position of the time. The hypothesis of Universal Sympathy, upon a degenerate version of which Byrd relies, is relatively coherent, and, as made clear by the extensive description in the novel, seeks to explain other physical phenomena such as magnetism and the transmission of heat. In fact, when Monsieur d'Igby (i.e. Sir Kenelm Digby, the individual most responsible for the development of the hypothesis) explains to Roberto his theory of the Powder of Sympathy, he specifically rules out the astrological connotations of 'influence at a distance' that we might otherwise expect to feature substantially in one of Eco's fictions.³⁹ 'But these are old wives' tales,' d'Igby warns, exhibiting a wariness towards metaphorical usage that is lacking elsewhere, 'an analogy of this sort is not enough to explain the operations of nature'.⁴⁰ Digby, alongside his diplomatic and naval endeavours, was the first to demonstrate that plants require oxygen, and would be, twenty years after the setting of Eco's novel, one of the founder members of the Royal Society.⁴¹ The distinction between science and what would now be considered as magic was a very fine one for some early members of the Royal Society, reflected in the alternative

³⁸ Rocco Capozzi, 'Intertextuality, Metaphors, and Metafiction as Cognitive Strategies in *The Island of the Day Before*', *Reading Eco*, pp.387-403, p.392.

³⁹ Eco's main source here would be Digby's own *Discours fait en une Celebre Assemblée, par le Chevalier Digby...Touchant la Guerison des Playes par la Poudre de Sympathie* (Paris: Augustin Courbé and Pierre Moet, 1658), translated by R. White as *A late Discourse Made in Solemne Assembly...touching the Cure of Wounds by the Powder of Sympathy* (London, 1658).

⁴⁰ 'non basta una analogia di questo genere a spiegare le operazioni della natura', *The Island of the Day Before*, p.155; p.166.

⁴¹ See R.T. Petersson, *Sir Kenelm Digby: The Ornament of England 1603-1665* (London: Cape, 1956). The main contemporary account of Digby's life may be found in John Aubrey, *Brief Lives. Chiefly of Contemporaries, set down by John Aubrey, between the Years 1669 & 1696*, edited by Andrew Clark (Oxford: Clarendon, 1898).

description of their project as 'Natural Philosophy'.⁴² This indicates the extent to which their work could still be viewed as essentially speculative rather than experimental. Prominent members of the Royal Society such as Boyle and even Newton included astrological and alchemical speculations in their inquiries.⁴³

The fact is that Digby's Powder of Sympathy, as used by Dr. Byrd, is not unscientific, it simply has the misfortune to be wrong. The problem with the hypothesis is that it is difficult to verify. Byrd relies on a badly formed experiment, in that it allows the experimenter's expectation of success to affect the measured result. Additionally, Byrd is not really testing the validity of the Powder of Sympathy at all. He is relying on it to determine his longitude, which he has no other means of discovering. He takes no account of the fact that he would be unable to distinguish between a positive result and a negative one in his experiment.

In this respect Byrd, d'Igby and the rest are marking out a historical period when the scientific outlook of the Natural Philosopher is exploring the world, but is not

⁴² The classic account of the foundation of the Royal Society is Thomas Sprat's *History of the Royal Society* (1667), edited by Jackson I. Cope and Harold Whitmore Jones (St. Louis, Missouri: Washington University Press, 1958). See also Dorothy Stimson, *Scientists and Amateurs: A History of the Royal Society* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1948).

⁴³ On Boyle's alchemy, see Louis Trenchard More, 'Boyle as alchemist', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 2 (1941), 61-76. Boyle corresponded with Newton on the subject of alchemical research until the death of the former in 1691. On Newton in general, the most up to date scientific biography is Richard Westfall's *Never at Rest: The Life of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). In recent years, some biographers of Newton have sought to centralise the importance of alchemy to his work. The most conscientious view of Newton's alchemy, including his reading of the Rosicrucian manifestoes, may be found in Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy, or "The Hunting of the Greene Lyon"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). However, it is Newton's willingness to commit himself to a predictive theory capable of measurement that defines his activities as scientific, not whether his results appear to us today to be reasonable or fantastic. The distinction of scientific validity from truth was dramatically made by Sir Karl Popper in a move of great significance for the growth of truth-relative accounts of reality in this century:

I wished to distinguish between science and pseudo-science; knowing very well that science often errs, and that pseudo-science may happen to stumble on the truth.

-- Karl R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, p.33.

yet fully wedded to the idea of experimental science, of using falsifiability as the ultimate criterion of acceptability.⁴⁴ The ideas playfully explored in *The Island of the Day Before* were genuine attempts to map the world in a scientific manner, but are still tainted by a belief in *adequatio rei et intellectus*. In other words, this pre-Royal Society world has Natural Philosophers who still tend to believe that it is adequate to conceive a beautiful explanation for nature for it to be true. The leading experimental scientist of his day, Galileo, makes a most revealing comment on this matter:

Ignorance has been the best teacher I have ever had, since in order to be able to demonstrate to my opponents the truths of my conclusions, I have been forced to prove them by a variety of experiments, though to satisfy myself alone I have never felt it necessary to make any.⁴⁵

Here, then, is a figure whose credibility as a scientist remains unquestionably high even today, but who appears to view experimentation primarily as a method of demonstration for the benefit of the uncomprehending masses of what is spontaneously apparent to his exquisite insight. This takes us all the way back to Peirce's conception of the faculty of abductive reasoning within the human mind. Galileo's statement implicitly encompasses the same idea that Peirce, in the Golden Age of Victorian science, would still be able to proclaim as reasonable, 'that unless man had had some inward light tending to make his guesses [...] much more often true than they would be by mere chance, the human race would long ago have been extirpated for its utter incapacity in the struggles for existence'.⁴⁶

In this respect, the most comprehensible recent counterpart of the Natural Philosopher as described in *The Island of the Day Before* is not the modern day scientist, but the Golden Age detective, the Sherlock Holmes who is unnervingly confident that, having put forward a hypothesis that covers the events, he will be

⁴⁴ 'One can sum all this up by saying that *the criterion of the scientific status of a theory is its falsifiability, or refutability, or testability*' (Karl R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, p.37).

⁴⁵ Cited in R.T. Petersson, *Sir Kenelm Digby*, p.121.

⁴⁶ Charles Sanders Peirce, Ms. 692, as catalogued in Richard S. Robin, *Annotated Catalogue of the Papers of Charles S. Peirce*.

proved to be right.⁴⁷ Naturally, this equivalence comes with a double *caveat*. On one side, just as scientific discourse today obscures the trial-and-error process in favour of a depersonalised, objectivised presentation of the results, so we must postulate a parallel process at least theoretically operating for the Natural Philosophers.⁴⁸ In short, Galileo's claim is rhetorically forceful, but is not necessarily descriptive of his actual working practice. On the other side, Eco, for one, has no compunction about collecting all scientific endeavour under the broad banner of abductive practice, identifying the difference between modern experimental science and detective work in the processing of abductive hypotheses within different interpretive communities. 'Detectives are rewarded by society for their impudence in betting by meta-abduction', he writes, where meta-abduction is the judgement as

⁴⁷ To say this is not, of course, to accept that the processes of scientific discovery are as simple or as untainted by self-interest as Sir Karl Popper's principle of falsifiability would suggest. Popper's contention that 'every genuine *test* of a theory is an attempt to falsify it, or to refute it' (Karl R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, p.36) is a sound logical basis for the acceptability of a hypothesis, without necessarily providing adequate explanation of the actual behaviour of scientists. In fact, since even before Popper's pronouncements, the rhetorical, persuasive and performative elements of the scientific process were being recognised (see L. Fleck, *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1935)). The more truth-relativistic accounts of science given by Paul Feyerabend and Thomas Kuhn reveal how scientists may still see themselves on a certain level as detective figures intellectually apprehending the truth about the world, like Galileo, in a flash of insight. Nevertheless, scientific hypotheses still stand or fall by measuring risky predictions, as Popper would have demanded, whether these are made by the scientists themselves or their rivals within the field. This kind of community, able to find consensus for, or withhold it from, the individual hypothesis, is precisely what is absent from the natural philosophy found in Eco's novel. See also G.N. Gilbert and M. Mulkay, 'Warranting scientific beliefs', *Social Studies of Science* 12 (1982), 383-408; Karl R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (New York: Basic, 1959); Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, second (enlarged) edition, *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, Volume 2 Number 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Paul K. Feyerabend, *Realism, Rationalism and Scientific Method and Problems of Empiricism* (Philosophical Papers Volumes 1 and 2) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and A. Heath (ed.), *Scientific Explanation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

⁴⁸ On the rhetoric of scientific discourse, see Rom Harré, 'Some Narrative Conventions of Scientific Discourse', Chapter Four in *Narrative in Culture: The Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy, and Literature*, edited by Cristopher Nash (London: Routledge, 1990), pp.81-101.

to whether the initial abductive guess in fact matches the world, 'whereas scientists are socially rewarded for their patience in testing their abductions'.⁴⁹

The limited extent to which this social reward was present in the 1640s is one of the areas where Eco's novel successfully captures the ambivalence of a time of changing attitudes. The reality is that Natural Philosophy was a term at this point gradually falling out of favour, although its practitioners were not yet to be widely known as 'Scientists'. The term *en vogue* in England in the early seventeenth century, as it would be throughout the early years of the Royal Society, was 'virtuoso'.⁵⁰ This will turn out to be a peculiarly useful term to apply to Eco's eccentric collection of European dilettante scientists. The apparent double-edgedness of the term was fully played out in public opinion. To be labelled a virtuoso, as was Digby among others, certainly indicated some admirable qualities -- an open and wide-ranging mind, an active and practical interest in the full range of experiences offered by the world, expertise, and a certain finesse. On the other hand, it also suggested unworldliness, an obsessive nature, eccentricity -- all of the faults of an enthusiast and collector with more time and money than sense. It is not overstating the case to suggest that Roberto and Father Caspar between them encapsulate all of the negative aspects of the virtuoso without attaining the practical results that could justify the virtuoso to the rest of society.

The popular idea of the virtuoso also brings into sharper focus the prominence of machinery in the novel, especially that designed and built with grandiose and

⁴⁹ Umberto Eco, 'Horns, Hooves, Insteps', in *The Sign of Three*, p.220. Eco defines meta-abduction as 'deciding as to whether the possible universe outlined by our first-level abductions is the same as the universe of our experience' (*The Sign of Three*, p.207). The extent to which this is a meaningful extension of the process of abduction is unclear, as an abductive guess is, if it is to be taken at all seriously, surely presented as explaining the universe of our experience. In fact, Eco thinks it only necessary for 'creative abduction', where 'the law must be invented *ex novo*' (*The Sign of Three*, p.207). Nevertheless, in this context, the term makes plain that Eco perceives a methodological difference between detectives, who are prepared to 'back a hunch', to assume that their mental model corresponds to reality, and modern scientists, who are expected not to take such a risk. I will therefore use 'meta-abduction' as though it were meaningfully separable from first-order abduction for the clarity of this distinction.

⁵⁰ See Walter E. Houghton, 'The English Virtuoso in the Seventeenth Century', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Nos. 1 and 2 (1942), 51-73 and 190-213 respectively.

absurdly over-optimistic intentions. The construction and use of such devices, especially those, such as Father Caspar's *Specula melitensis*, that were hubristically designed to capture the entirety of the experiential world, was a defining characteristic of the virtuoso. When Thomas Shadwell gives the name 'Gimcrack' to the virtuoso in his 1676 play, *The Virtuoso*, it refers as much to the comical mechanical devices of the man as to his pomposity.⁵¹

To return to the discrepancy between the scientists' hesitant experimental progress and the apparently pure insight of their results, a particularly clear link with the detective tradition can be seen in the work of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Sherlock Holmes may have caught the public imagination, but his methods of detection were almost indistinguishable from those of Conan Doyle's bluff, eccentric scientist, Professor Challenger.⁵² Holmes typically picks a prime suspect much earlier than he indicates to the baffled Watson, saving the exposition of his suspicions until such a time as he can assemble evidence to demonstrate it. We may note, in passing, that he seeks to prove, not falsify, his hypothesis. Challenger makes his bold hypotheses equally early, but declares himself as soon as the thought has occurred. He therefore elicits admiration for his prodigious insight, and bothers to acquire supporting evidence, like Galileo, only as a means of convincing the dull and conservative minds of the scientific establishment, who perform the same choric function as do the police for Holmes.

Challenger, whose adventures we can be sure that Eco has read, is a scientist who behaves like a detective, betting on meta-abduction with the same outrageous impudence as Holmes.⁵³ In Popper's terms, it is pure pseudo-science; seeking, if

⁵¹ Thomas Shadwell, *The Virtuoso*, edited by Marjorie Hope Nicholson and David Stuart Rhodes (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1966). See especially Nicholson's note on the meanings of 'gimcrack', p.xviii, although she appears to think the word largely obsolete.

⁵² Professor Challenger featured in the novels *The Lost World* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), *The Poison Belt* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913), and *The Land of Mist* (London: Hutchinson, 1926), the last of which was an argument for the spiritualism to which Conan Doyle was a convert. The character also featured in two short stories, 'The Disintegration Machine', and 'When the World Screamed', both collected in *The Maracot Deep and Other Stories* (London: Murray, 1929).

⁵³ In accepting that *The Name of the Rose* can support just about any allusion that readers can find within it to Sherlock Holmes, Eco says, 'I believe I have read the

any evidence at all, only confirmations, never falsifications. In the same way, we recognise the virtuosi in Eco's novel as struggling on the cusp of science and pseudo-science. They are yet more figures on the margins of interpretive thought, part of Eco's pantheon of liminal figures, simultaneously indicating the potential for getting things right, and the awkward contingency of getting them wrong. In the boldness of their meta-abductions, they are Golden Age detectives, with one important difference. Golden Age detectives operate in a world where the solution, the identity of the culprit, is determined only by an author determined that they should be right. The riskiness of meta-abduction need never be exposed. Eco's pseudo-scientists are betting against the modern day reader's scientific knowledge. Even if that knowledge happens to be rather limited, it will easily determine that the theory of the Powder of Sympathy is an interpretive bet that failed.⁵⁴

From Eden to Eden

Foucault's Pendulum ended with an image of quiet, natural beauty to set against the manic interpretive games that preceded it. While this image evidently called upon a tradition of Italian pastoralism that ranges from Foscolo to Pavese, it does so within a symbolic evocation of a state of Edenic simplicity. The notion of Eden, and particularly of Edenic language, is remarkably strong in Eco, emerging not just in the novels but also as the governing idea of *The Search for the Perfect Language*. Given his post-structuralist credentials, it might be anticipated that Eco would be dismissive of the idea of Eden for its Cratylitic associations -- the implication that there can truly be a state of perfect referentiality without semiotic drift. In fact, Eco appears to find the mytheme enormously powerful precisely for these very

complete works of Arthur Conan Doyle' (*Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p.80).

⁵⁴ The same restriction also applies to Conan Doyle's Professor Challenger stories. Challenger's hypotheses frequently rely on scientific concepts or prejudices, such as interplanetary ether, that have been falsified or superseded, undermining the credibility of Challenger as self-declared genius. This may, in part, explain why these stories have not enjoyed a fraction of the success of the Holmes saga, despite the significant structural similarities.

associations. The assertion that meanings are elusive and arbitrary now offers little in the way of fresh insight or shock. Eco can return to ideas of perfect language, Cratylitic referentiality and Eden not as dangerous fallacies to be combatted (if indeed they ever were), but as ideas capable of nostalgic revisitation for their symbolic value. The paradisaical island of *The Island of the Day Before* obviously conjures up a strong reference to Eden. I intend to explore how the relevance of the Edenic is worked out, in Eco's third novel, particularly by its reference to the quest for the 180° meridian, and through its intertextual reference to Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*.

The indeterminability of longitude, and especially of the 180° meridian, is the main symbol in the novel for Eco's cautionary tale of interpretation. As in *Foucault's Pendulum*, where the eponymous device represents the search for a fixed point, and the seductive fallacy of any such point that can be located, so the quest for the meridian in *The Island of the Day Before* is similarly quixotic. Caspar expounds to Roberto his wild theory of how the waters of the biblical Flood originated from the other side of the meridian, where it is still yesterday. In doing so he betrays a belief in the literal existence of arbitrary structures of interpretation. This is the familiar mistake; understanding a structure designed as an interpretive tool as though it were a real entity, a Structure. In an oblique reference to quixotic self-deception, the term used for the fixed point in *The Island of the Day Before* is '*punto fijo*'. Rocco Capozzi identifies this as deriving from Cervantes' story 'El Coloquio de los perros', where the *punto fijo*, though conceived as a fixed point, may be located anywhere.⁵⁵

The Island of the Day Before determines an arbitrary *punto fijo*, where any notions of uniqueness are derived from Roberto's belief in them. At the same time, however, Roberto observes everything (plants, animals) as the opposite of the Old World. Where plants are immobile and placid in Europe, in Roberto's New World they appear mobile and aggressive. While we are continually reminded through

⁵⁵ M. de Cervantes, 'El coloquio de los perros', in *Novelas Ejemplares* (Madrid: de la Cuesta, 1613), translated by C.A. Jones as 'The Dogs' Colloquy', in *Exemplary Stories* (London: Penguin, 1972), pp.195-252. In the story told by the dog Berganza, a mathematician complains that he has been 'looking for the fixed point ['punto fijo'] for twenty-two years, and within an ace of finding it [when] all of a sudden I'm so far away from it that I'm absolutely amazed' (*Exemplary Stories*, p.249). Cited by Capozzi in *Reading Eco*, p.439, n.38.

various narratorial nudges and palimpsestic commentaries on his observations that Roberto's island cannot really be ultimately the ends of the earth, the opposite of the known world, all of the textual description indicates otherwise. It becomes a kind of counter-factual world, where everything Roberto holds as true has been reversed.

As such, *The Island of the Day Before* is a part of the tradition of the allegorical travel narratives, such as Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*. The closest analogue is Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, which transforms the familiar arc of a shipwreck story into a quest for the South Pole.⁵⁶ Poe's story is an unashamedly sensational tale of adventure at sea, incorporating not only stowaways, mutiny and shipwreck, but also a *Marie Céleste*-type ghost ship, cannibalism, and murderous savages. The bloodthirsty tone could hardly be more distant from that of Eco's ponderously philosophical novel, but there are dark similarities. For one thing, Pym stows away in a crate, an intruder secreted in a rat's nest. Some time later, with Pym revealed, the ship capsizes, making it a floating wreck. Pym and a small handful of companions must survive the foreign territory of the ship transformed by its trauma into a desolate island. Poe achieves the reconciliation of ship and desert island into a bizarre hybrid landscape in a manner that foreshadows Eco's similar device in *The Island of the Day Before*.

Most importantly, however, *Arthur Gordon Pym* is the narrative of a quest for a fixed point, the South Pole. Unvisited at the time of Poe's writing, the South Pole is a *punto fijo* with which Poe tantalizes his readers, before finally circumscribing the narrative just as it is to be reached. Of course, unlike Eco's *punto fijo*, the South Pole is a definable and specifically locatable point. Poe's story dwells on physical hardship, the practical difficulties of reaching such a remote and isolated part of the earth. This difficulty -- the reason why, in Poe's time, expeditions to find the Pole were failing -- is overcome in the novel through inversion. Ships could not force their way through the ice, so Poe has his explorers' boat (in the end they travel in a canoe) drawn ever southwards by an increasingly strong current. In *The Island of the Day Before*, the problem is essentially conceptual. The lengthy speculations on the unattainable island require Roberto to be near enough to consider them, but just

⁵⁶ Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, edited with an introduction and commentary by Harold Beaver (London: Penguin, 1975).

far enough that he cannot reach the shore. The inversions in Eco's text are between near and far, hence the prominent use of the telescope, which brings far things near. All the time, not just in terms of reaching the island, but also in terms of his interpretive guesses, Roberto is so near and yet so far.

These types of inversions (near versus far, plant versus animal, constraint versus freedom, and so on) are sinister rereadings of the idea of the carnivalesque, the 'world reversed' which was seen in a more positive aspect in *The Name of the Rose*.⁵⁷ Even the beautiful underwater forest of the coral reef turns out to be poisonous, as Roberto is stung by a stone fish.⁵⁸ All of these shadowy inversions are themselves in the shadow of the notorious inversion of values used by Poe in *Arthur Gordon Pym*. When the travellers in Poe's tale reach an isle, Tsalal, further south than any previously explored, they discover black natives living in a barren parody of civilized life, and where anything white is anathema. As Harold Beaver puts it, 'where white is taboo an equation of blackskin with black sin -- a spiritual apartheid -- is indicated whose paradigm, of course, is America's own deep South'.⁵⁹ Poe's racial politics aside, Tsalal is evidently an anti-paradise (Harold Beaver calls it an 'inverted Eden')⁶⁰ where all is colourless and barren, the natives are treacherous, and everything appears to be in a natural state of sin.

Pym's journey ever southwards must reach a terminal point at the absolute South. Unlike Roberto's search for the 180° meridian, which can be conventionally located anywhere, because the Earth rotates on a North-South axis, the South Pole is both a definite and a demonstrable location. Pym's journey is therefore towards certainty, towards a purity that is primal, even primeval. The narrative breaks off perhaps because this purity is too fundamental to be described, as mere description would be

⁵⁷ William and Adso see in the marginalia of the deceased Adelmo 'a world reversed with respect to the one to which our senses have accustomed us' ('un mondo rovesciato rispetto a quello cui ci hanno abituati i nostri sensi'). *The Name of the Rose*, p.84; p.76. See Coletti, pp.112-141.

⁵⁸ *The Island of the Day Before*, p.416; p.450.

⁵⁹ Harold Beaver, 'Introduction', in *Arthur Gordon Pym*, (London: Penguin, 1975), p.23.

⁶⁰ Harold Beaver, 'Introduction', in *Arthur Gordon Pym* (London: Penguin, 1975), p.25.

a dilution of the primal expression, the perfect language, at which the novel's final pages hint.

The hints come when Pym and his remaining companion, Peters, locate some mysterious writing carved into a chasm at the heart of Tsalal. The unclear figure who pens the final note to Pym's tale identifies the hieroglyphics, and the shapes of the chasms themselves, as deriving from Ethiopian, Arabic and Egyptian. This, together with Sidney Kaplan's assertion that the Tsalalians are speaking a form of Hebrew, indicates that the island is inscribed by God as the home of the cursed sons of Ham.⁶¹ Poe's combination of anti-Eden with an Adamic language enables Eco to make a doubly playful comparison to Pym's voyage in his novel. As ever in Eco, the perfect language is inaccessible, if deeply appealing, as indicated by the baroque complexity of Padre Emanuele's machine for generating metaphors. Eco combines the expected assault on Adamic language with the tantalising possibility of a return to the home of Adamic language, Eden.

The first image of Eden in *The Island of the Day Before* comes not as somewhere to be reached, but in its more usual metaphorical usage as a paradise lost:

credo, proprio a rifar la storia dei suoi disagi, cercava di trovar consolazione per il suo stato presente, come se il naufragio lo avesse restituito a quel paradiso terrestre che aveva conosciuto alla Griva, e da cui si era allontanato entrando tra le mure della città assediata.

I believe that in reconstructing the history of his misfortunes he was seeking consolation for his present state, as if the shipwreck had restored him to that earthly paradise he had known at La Griva and had left behind on entering the walls of the besieged city.⁶²

This mention of paradise connected with the father's estate in *The Island of the Day Before* brings to the fore an aspect of Eco's fiction that can only be unravelled in relation to his treatment of the role of the father. Indeed, one way of mapping the differences in the approach of the novels to the interpretive problem would be to examine their treatment of the father. There is a conventional, child-like elevation

⁶¹ See Sidney Kaplan, 'Introduction', in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960).

⁶² *The Island of the Day Before*, p.50; p.52.

of the paternal role to a position of authority second only to God. The significance, and the significant absence, of the father in Eco's novels is related to the absence of God as guarantor of signification. The father, when he appears, is a limited and worldly surrogate for the divine transcendental signifier. This situation of surrogacy is brought into play immediately at the start of *The Name of the Rose* with the relationship between William and Adso. The absence of Adso's father pushes William into the clearly defined role of surrogate father. Adso spells this out in his initial description of William:

è proprio dei giovani legarsi a un uomo più anziano e più saggio non solo per il fascino della parola e l'acutezza della mente, ma pur anche per la forma superficiale del corpo, che ne risulta carissima, come accade per la figura di un padre.

it is characteristic of the young to become bound to an older and wiser man not only by the spell of his words and the sharpness of his mind, but also by the superficial form of his body, which proves very dear, like the figure of a father.⁶³

As a father figure William is compassionate, liberal, wise and non-judgemental, exemplified in his measured response to Adso's confession of his sexual activity.⁶⁴ He is a fantasy of the father as hero and as friend, but he is correspondingly unable to provide authoritative answers to Adso's worries. As a guardian and as a monk, William is expected, at the least, to assuage Adso's minor theological queries and provide certainty, regardless of his own private doubts. William appears at his most modern when he balks at this aspect of his role. Instead he deepens Adso's doubts with his own apparently agnostic answer to Adso's climactic question on the existence of God.⁶⁵ In this respect William abundantly reinforces the idea of interpretive structure over a falsely conceived final Structure. He takes on the role

⁶³ *The Name of the Rose*, p.23; p.15.

⁶⁴ 'Brother William heard me out earnestly, but with a hint of indulgence' ('Frate Guglielmo mi ascoltò con grande serietà, ma con un'ombra di indulgenza'), *The Name of the Rose*, p.254; p.252.

⁶⁵ *The Name of the Rose*, p.496; p.493.

of a father figure while at the same time undermining paternal (even, to an extent, patriarchal) authority.

In *Foucault's Pendulum*, Casaubon's father, only mentioned once, does offer some of the absolute authority systematically denied in *The Name of the Rose*. In denying the young Casaubon access to a comic strip magazine, Casaubon's father brushes aside his son's argument about the supposed educational purpose of the publication.

Mio padre, senza alzare gli occhi dal suo giornale, disse: "Il fine del tuo giornale è il fine di tutti i giornali, e cioè di vendere più copie che si può."

"The purpose of your magazine," my father replied without looking up from his paper, "is the purpose of every magazine: to sell as many copies as it can."⁶⁶

The father's comments, given at the start of Casaubon's account of himself, are the touchstone of wisdom and sanity that Casaubon will forget at his peril. The advice, however, is of a sceptical and gently anti-authoritarian nature. Casaubon's father reveals a politically alert and ironic critical awareness, a controlled distance that is lost by all of the Editors as they become entangled in their ironic games. It is therefore possible to see Casaubon's memory of his father as an Edenic myth of sorts, a time when the world could make sense, a time when alien, capitalist authority could be meaningfully challenged. The fall from grace of the Editors in *Foucault's Pendulum* can only be properly understood if we take this perspective, once we recall that the *Gruppo 63* regarded its experimental poetics as a response to the evils of industrialised capitalism. As outlined in Chapter One, the Fall is the dissipation of revolutionary energies after the high hopes of 1968. Casaubon's father is a Chestertonian figure, a practical, unostentatious man whose scepticism operates because he has a political stance, an underlying faith in a Structure (although all we can really determine of this is that he is politically somewhere left of centre). The narrative arc of *Foucault's Pendulum* can then be seen to originate with Casaubon's loss of the Edenic state of certainty promised by the father's robust, sceptical

⁶⁶ *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.47; p.49.

intelligence. The (inevitably false) reattainment of that Eden is achieved by Casaubon as he patiently waits in the Piedmont hills for the arrival of 'Them', filling the hours by reminiscing and considering the natural beauty around him.

Thus the dynamic, the journey from lost primal Eden to unattainable final paradise is similar to that of *The Name of the Rose*, even though the circumstantial meaning is opposed. In *The Name of the Rose*, Adso begins in a state of certitude, implicitly believing the ecclesiastical orthodoxy in which he has been educated. Despite the sceptical and politically radical interpretive structure provided by William in his role as paternal surrogate, Adso eventually chooses to return to the old certainties, finding bliss in the authoritarian blandishments that William had discreetly questioned. The falsity of this final sheltering under Structure is indicated by the final images of Adso scrabbling among the ruins of the abbey, years later, for fragments from which to reconstruct a meaningful interpretation of events. Talking of his pathetic collection of manuscript scraps, but unconsciously addressing also his theological crisis, Adso writes that he can no longer understand 'whether in it there is a design that goes beyond the natural sequence of events and the times that connect them'.⁶⁷

Adso's paradisiacal end, a 'broad desert, perfectly level and boundless, where the truly pious heart succumbs in bliss', seems, in the context of the novel's presentations of theology, unattainable.⁶⁸ Casaubon's Eden is unreachable because something vital has been lost: a position of reasonable understanding of the world has been surrendered through wilful misreading by an essentially solipsistic interpretive community.

If we are searching for points where Eco's theoretical stance does not tally with his narrative presentations, then the presentation of revolutionary socialism within *Foucault's Pendulum* is a genuine instance. There is little doubt that Marxist thought would be classified under the Ecovian analysis as a Structure -- a theory vulnerable precisely because of its claims to universality and its inflexibility (just as Karl Popper criticises it for its unfalsifiability, and Borges for its provision of a 'semblance of

⁶⁷ 'se in essa vi sia una trama che vada al di là della sequenza naturale degli eventi e dei tempi che li connettono', *The Name of the Rose*, p.503; p.501.

⁶⁸ 'deserto amplissimo, perfettamente piano e incommensurabile, in cui il cuore veramente pio soccombe beato', *The Name of the Rose*, p.503; p.501.

order').⁶⁹ At the same time, however, this is a structure for which Eco retains a degree of sympathy, in its broader aims.⁷⁰ That sympathy is illustrated in the fond memorializing of the days of student radicalism, the paralleling of the 1968 uprisings with the noble activities of the Resistance and in the reverential image of the wise, quietly political father.

This is not to say that *Foucault's Pendulum* follows *The Name of the Rose* in its narrator's quixotic pursuit of ideological certainty. Adso declares himself satisfied to accept the *status quo* with no more questions, even though his vision of that broad desert of paradise, suspiciously reminiscent of the purgatorial desert in *Il deserto dei Tartari*, is already thoroughly undermined by the rest of his narrative. By contrast, *Foucault's Pendulum* does not offer a paradisiacal vision of the next world as a socialist utopia. There is no room in the novel for such a transcendent political vision. Utopianism is associated only with the Marxist, passionate Amparo. She is a mystically inclined and ethereal figure compared to the more grounded, reasonable, Lia. Between them, Lia and Casaubon's father hold out the promise of a return to sanity with their scepticism, common-sense reasonableness and insightful wisdom. Although, as indicated in Chapter Three, Lia's position is open to deconstruction through a serious application of Eco's version of post-structuralism (as, in truth, any such position should be), the textual investment in her reasonableness and essential

⁶⁹ 'Yet instead of accepting the refutations the followers of Marx re-interpreted both the theory and the evidence in order to make them agree. In this way they rescued the theory from refutation; but they did so at the price of adopting a device which made it irrefutable' (Karl R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, p.37).

'Ten years ago any symmetry with a semblance of order -- dialectical materialism, anti-Semitism, Nazism -- was sufficient to entrance the minds of men' (Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths*, p.42).

For Popper's arguments against Marxist thought, see also Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies: Volume II, The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx and the Aftermath* (London: Routledge, 1945) and *The Poverty of Historicism*, second edition (London: Routledge, 1960).

⁷⁰ In his theoretical work, as David Robey acknowledges, Eco 'constructs a semiotic theory at least partially reconcilable with Marxist historicism' (David Robey, 'Introduction', in *The Open Work*, p.xxiii). Elsewhere, Eco's journalism frequently addresses political issues from a left-of-centre viewpoint that he assumes is largely shared by his audience.

human values is unmistakeable. She offers a practical Eden to Casaubon. He realises, too late, that it might be sustainable if he concentrates only on surface experience, 'surfaces on surfaces upon surfaces', rather than pushing common-sense structures of interpretation to destruction.⁷¹ Casaubon himself is finally left in the position of the worldly-wise father, distant from his son, perhaps never to see him again. Ruefully, he realises that Giulio, the baby, will inevitably make the same mistake, searching for Platonic perfection when only pragmatic goodness is available:

Ha trovato una palla, una formica, un filo d'erba, e vi sta vedendo in abisso il paradiso. Anche lui lo saprà troppo tardi. Sarà buono, e bene, che consumi così, da solo, la sua giornata.

He's found a ball, an ant, a blade of grass, and there he sees paradise in the abyss. He, too, will know it too late. He will be good; never mind, let him spend his day like this, alone.⁷²

The modified replay of the three associated tropes of distant father, lost Eden and unattainable paradise would be remarkable even before bringing *The Island of the Day Before* into consideration. Here, however, we find the most powerful version of the pattern. Eco's most evocative tropical adventure is in *The Island of the Day Before*. Norma Bouchard correctly links the opening of the novel to Eco's essay 'On the Possibility of Generating Aesthetic Messages in an Edenic Language'.⁷³ Roberto's descent from a world of primal certainty comes with his first encounter with the ambiguity of language, as Bouchard recognises.⁷⁴ Roberto's father, old Pozzo, expressing paternal pride, proclaims little Roberto with the cry, 'You are my

⁷¹ 'Superfici di superfici su superfici', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.507; p.640, my translation.

⁷² *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.508; p.641, my translation. Weaver oddly translates 'vi sta vedendo in abisso il paradiso' as 'in it he sees paradise and the abyss', muffling the point that the illusion of paradise is found in the vertigo of meanings produced by overinterpretation.

⁷³ Norma Bouchard, 'Whose "Excess of Wonder" Is It Anyway?: Reading Umberto Eco' Tangle of Hermetic and Pragmatic Semiosis in *The Island of the Day Before*', in *Reading Eco*, pp.350-361.

⁷⁴ *Reading Eco*, p.353.

firstborn!'.⁷⁵ The young Roberto, ignorant of the strong paternal, cultural and genealogical resonances of the designation, instead chooses to see in this the possibility of another child, reading the statement as 'You, and not another, are my firstborn son'.⁷⁶

Hence, Roberto's evil twin, Ferrante, is born, in concept if not in actuality. This follows exactly the process sketched in the essay on Edenic language, where it is the utterance of an ambiguous statement by the father (God) that leads the son (Adam) to generate increasingly 'baroque' (Eve's term) aesthetic messages -- those that do not simply and purely designate.⁷⁷ Roberto falls from Eden into a realm of speculation. In a sense, the rest of the novel is the account of his own increasingly baroque aesthetic messages, his speculations of possible, fictional, worlds. Finally, faced with the unattainable island, which is filled with its gaudy creatures, allusively shaped plants and paradisiacal atmosphere, it is inevitable that Roberto should start to conceive of it as a new Eden. In this he is only following the preferred interpretation of the new discoveries by Europeans.

The second time around, however, Eden is not a place of pure, direct referentiality, of simple, inevitable meanings. It becomes its opposite, as happens also in *Foucault's Pendulum*. Reading as a detective, for the subtle, underlying truth, the reader becomes so paranoid that any interpretation becomes valid. This is the post-structuralist nightmare from which Eco is trying to wake, couched in *The Island of the Day Before* in the baroque love of allegory and symbolism.

The chapter 'Delights for the Ingenious: A Collection of Emblems' ('Teatro d'Imprese' in the original), with its deliberately bewildering elaboration of the possible meanings of the dove, is itself the symbol of this post-structuralist paranoia *avant la lettre*. With a self-referential flourish, the discourse on the multiple meanings of the dove concludes that for Roberto the dove was 'not only a message, like every Device or Emblem, but a message whose message was the

⁷⁵ "Tu sei il mio primogenito!", *The Island of the Day Before*, p.24; p.22.

⁷⁶ "tu, e non un altro, sei il mio figlio primogenito", *The Island of the Day Before*, p.24; p.22.

⁷⁷ *The Role of the Reader*, p.98.

undecipherability of clever messages'.⁷⁸ Even the phrasing of this thought recalls the similar conclusion reached by Casaubon. 'I have understood', he decides. 'And the certainty that there is nothing to understand should be my peace, my triumph'.⁷⁹

In fact, Roberto is precisely the kind of interpretive monster against which *Foucault's Pendulum* sets itself, engaging as he does in endlessly rising spirals of increasingly improbable speculations, simply because there is no available constraint on his interpretive mania. There is, fatally, no glimmer of a redeeming ironic awareness of his own situation. Unfortunately, just as we would expect a paranoid, solipsistic Diabolical to be unpalatable, so Roberto, without the palliative of an ironic self-awareness, is unlovable. While Eco's decision not to temper Roberto's character with an ironic stance that might jeopardise the set of the novel is understandable, it means that the irony must be brought in at the level of the narrator-editor, leaving Roberto a remote, patronized, ridiculous, irredeemable figure.

The Narrative of Speculative Reconstruction

Eco's chosen narrative scheme, with the events mediated by a problematic figure whose discourse highlights the difficulty of interpretation, is by now familiar. In several respects, this is the least subtle narrative scheme of the three novels. He wastes no time in supplying the 'high concept', the hook, or selling-point of the novel. Chapter One, in clear reference to the verbal excess at the start of *I promessi sposi*, begins:

"Eppure m'inorgoglisco della mia umiliazione, e poiché a tal privilegio son condannato, quasi godo di un'abborrita salvezza: sono, credo, a memoria d'uomo, l'unico essere della nostra specie ad aver fatto naufragio su di una nave deserta."

⁷⁸ 'non era solo, come ogni Impresa o Emblema, un Messaggio, ma un messaggio il cui messaggio era l'insondabilità dei messaggi arguti', *The Island of the Day Before*, p.328; p.352-3.

⁷⁹ 'Ho capito. La certezza che non vi era nulla di capire, questo dovrebbe essere la mia pace e il mio trionfo', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.508; p.640-1.

*I take pride withal in my humiliation, and as I am to this privilege condemned, almost I find joy in an abhorrent salvation; I am, I believe, alone of all of our race, the only man in human memory to have been shipwrecked and cast up upon a deserted ship.*⁸⁰

The opening of the novel quotes directly from Roberto's writing, before the narrator steps in to identify the author and date the text. After a couple of pages of speculation on the manner of Roberto's arrival on the *Daphne*, the narrator turns back to the supposed primary texts, quoting again Roberto's overblown and convoluted prose, but only as far as the lines already given on the opening page. The narrator breaks off here to commence a series of quibbles over the literal possibility of the events described, and particularly as to the temporal relationship of the writing to the sequence of the events narrated. Eco's narrator complains that it is implausible that Roberto begins writing as soon after finding himself on the *Daphne* as he claims, after taking into account the time required to recover from his ordeal.

In some respects this opening is an obvious reference to the equally stuttering Foreword to Manzoni's *I promessi sposi*, in which the narrator feels obliged to intercede and rescue the reader from the turgid seventeenth century prose in which the original manuscript is supposed to be written. As previously described, however, the purpose of this gambit in Manzoni's novel is primarily a linguistic one, to emphasise the significance of the relatively clear, modern Italian adopted as the novel's mode of expression. In *The Island of the Day Before*, however, Eco is evidently not promoting a particular discourse to replace one regarded as faulty or outmoded. In fact, the discussion in the first chapter of the difficulty of knowing to which parts of the ship Roberto is referring at any particular moment reinforces the central theme of the inability of language to correspond to reality, leaving the narrator to make a consciously arbitrary and inadequate judgement on the text:

Tanto che prendo una decisione: cercherò di decifrare le sue intenzioni, e poi userò i termini che ci sono più familiari. Se mi sbaglio, pazienza: la storia non cambia.

⁸⁰ *The Island of the Day Before*, p.5; p.1.

So I have come to a decision here: I will try to decipher his intentions, then use the terms most familiar to us. If I am mistaken, too bad: the story remains the same.⁸¹

The point being made is the first in a series of fairly straightforward ones about the problems of textual interpretation. It quickly becomes apparent through the narratorial asides that the information provided by Roberto on a whole series of issues pertinent to his circumstances is insufficient for narratorial purposes. The account of Roberto boarding the *Daphne*, the event that might be expected to be the dramatic climax of the narrative of his life, is dithered away at the opening of the novel, with the excuse that Roberto's own account is unclear:

Roberto è confuso nel registrare l'evento, ma bisogna accettare l'idea, se alla fine era al castello di prora, che in qualche modo a quella scala si fosse aggrappato. Forse è salito un poco alla volta [...] Dovrebbe aver dormito ventiquattr'ore, è un calcolo appropriato se si è svegliato che era notte, ma come rinato.

Roberto is confused in his recollection of the incident, but if he ended up in the forecastle, we must accept the idea that he somehow managed to grab hold of that ladder. Perhaps he climbed a little at a time [...] He must have slept for twenty-four hours, which is a fair calculation if he awoke when it was night, but felt as if reborn.⁸²

This frustratingly contingent narrative structure introduces the reader very quickly to the dominant idea of the novel -- that very often all we can do is to speculate. As in *The Name of the Rose*, Eco uses a series of preteritions to blur the narrative order, particularly at the start of the novel (for obvious reasons). Nevertheless, this places the narrator in an ironic relation to the narrative. Eco devotes a section of *Reflections on The Name of the Rose* to the use of preterition in that novel, credibly pointing to the necessity of giving explanations of historical events and characters for the modern reader that would not be required by the ostensible audience of the narrator, Adso of Melk. There is no such requirement in *The Island of the Day Before*. It is clear long before Hollywood films are mentioned that the narratorial voice belongs to a

⁸¹ *The Island of the Day Before*, p.11; p.8. Of course, the Italian 'la storia' implies not just 'the story remains the same' but also 'the events remain the same'.

⁸² *The Island of the Day Before*, p.6; p.2, my translation.

twentieth century commentator, which on the principle of economy, can be closely identified with Eco himself.⁴³ There is, then, no logical ban on the narrator entering on explanatory asides for the benefit of the general reader, and in fact the novel has more than its share of such asides.

This does nothing to explain, however, the narratorial reliance on conventional preteritions, such as the very early reference to 'that poor, infinitely ulcerated dog that, as it happens, I have not yet been able to mention because Roberto does not write of him until later'.⁴⁴ The narrative is here following the manner in which Roberto confuses past and present. His notion of cause and effect is noticeably weak, and made all the more so by the willingness with which he equates the past with his present situation. When Father Caspar reveals to Roberto his theory of the Flood, it simply gives Roberto the image, the material mechanism that fits his confused notion of time. Roberto finds Caspar's notion of a world in which yesterday can be accessed by traversing the meridian to be appealing not so much because it is intellectually convincing, but because his grasp of temporal flow and causality is so woefully slack to begin with.

Roberto's confusions are not limited to those of time. His inability to read character, to penetrate the minds of those he meets in the manner paradigmatically expected of the detective, is so marked that the process is highlighted by its visible failure. We are used by now to seeing Eco's detective characters fail to penetrate to the inner essence of objects, situations and people, being left grasping only the names. In Roberto's case, however, not only can he not understand the world around him, he can very often not even glean the right name. His use of the arbitrary name 'Lilia' for woman who catches his eye in Paris is fairly typical of its time. Anagrammatising, half-hiding the name of the beloved, producing a *roman-à-clef*, are literary activities that Roberto can reasonably have picked up in the Parisian salons he has frequented.

⁴³ The narrator discusses the possibility that Roberto's manuscripts could be found by Captain Bligh, who will die 'unaware that Hollywood will make him odious to all posterity'. ('senza sapere che Hollywood lo avrebbe reso esecrabile a posteri', *The Island of the Day Before*, p.470; p.509).

⁴⁴ 'quel povero cane infinitamente ulcerato, di cui peraltro non ho ancora avuto modo di dire perché Roberto ne scriverà solo più tardi', *The Island of the Day Before*, p.19; p.16.

However, the encryption of the Lady's name, taken together with the dreamy, abstracted narrative style of much of the text, seems to point to a particular stylistic affinity with the fictionalised, fantastical autobiography we find in Sir Kenelm Digby's *Private Memoirs*.⁴⁵ Digby's memoirs cover an early decade of his life, particularly his peregrinations through Europe while attempting to resolve a frustrated love affair with his future wife, Venetia Stanley. Given the appearance of Digby in *The Island of the Day Before*, this must place Digby's account as a likely influence on Roberto's travels.⁴⁶ Eco's novel is structured around two concretely realised set-pieces, Roberto's twin sieges, the battle of Casale and his stranding upon the *Daphne*. The events and activities that surround and precede these two moments of relative stasis are narrated with a looseness, devoid of detail and stripped of local colour, that can aggravate the reader. This is evidently a conscious aspect of the narration, as the narrator reports an incident in Paris given a concrete date in

⁴⁵ Sir Kenelm Digby, *Private Memoirs of Sir Kenelm Digby, Gentleman of the Bedchamber to King Charles the First. Written by Himself* (London: Saunders & Otley, 1827).

⁴⁶ Digby's influence extends throughout the novel, and can be seen clearly in the final scene of Roberto contemplating how abandoning himself to the current could bring him a transcendence of time, space and even love, an infinity in which to continue his dreams. This moment may be compared to a paragraph by Digby that Eco may well have encountered, it being used by Petersson to close his biography of Digby:

I will leap boldly into that fountain of bliss, and cast myself headlong into that sea of felicity where I can neither apprehend shallow waters nor fear I shall be so little immersed and drowned as to meet with any shelf or dry ground to moderate and stint my happiness. A self-activity and unbounded extent and essence free from time and place, assure me sufficiently that I need desire no more. Which way soever I look, I lose my sight in seeing an infinity round about me: length without points, breadth without lines, depth without any surface. All content, all pleasure, all restless rest, all an unquietness and transport of delight, all an ecstasy of fruition.

-- Sir Kenelm Digby, 'Of Man's Soul', in *Two Treatises, in the One of which, the Nature of Bodies; in the Other, the Nature of Mans Soule, is looked into: in way of discovery, of the Immortality of Reasonable Soules* (Paris: Gilles Blaizot, 1644), p.130.

Roberto's account with the comment: 'at last a firm date'.⁸⁷ The manner in which the narrative is frequently denied reference to the outside world matches very closely, however, the dominant style of Digby's *Private Memoirs*, where, as Petersson rightly points out:

Of concrete detail almost nothing is to be found in it, and of actual names, places, and dates, nothing at all. It is as though a true story were being told, but as in a dream, with a veil drawn down between us and reality.⁸⁸

In the *Private Memoirs*, which aligns itself with standard romance practice, all characters and places are subjected to a shift to a romanticised classical realm, where Paris becomes 'Athens', and other names are puns, pseudo-anagrams or classical references.⁸⁹ The heroine, for example, is Stelliana, recognisably derived from the Latin 'stella', but also conveniently close to an anagram of Venetia Stanley's family name. In sum, it is a less magical, less utopian, more gossipy version of Spenser's allegorized England in *The Faerie Queene*, itself based largely on medieval romance. Roberto's manuscripts, then, as presented by the editor-narrator, largely conform to a recognisable Elizabethan and Baroque romance model in their coy transformation of the beloved, and the landscape in which she moves. There are, nevertheless, three important respects in which Roberto's version differs from the model.

First of all, Roberto does provide concrete detail, with genuine names, which we are to understand that the editor-narrator can render as unallegorical, descriptive prose, at certain points in the narrative. The account of life on the *Daphne* is variable on this measure, partly because of the extensiveness of the account itself, but the narrative of the siege of Casale is notably visual in its realisation, with some effort expended in narrating the movements of the battle beyond the experiences of Roberto himself. The reason for this approach can be understood if we imagine Eco's novel undertaken as a conscientiously fantasised *roman-à-clef*. The historical

⁸⁷ 'finalmente una data a cui appigliarci', *The Island of the Day Before*, p.166; p.177.

⁸⁸ Petersson, p.43.

⁸⁹ In fact, Digby's *Private Memoirs* are themselves directly based upon Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*.

references and characters would be impenetrable to many readers, baffling the sense of historical verisimilitude. As a solution, Eco adopts a pseudo-*roman-à-clef* style, where historical characters travel under light disguise. This allows the gesture towards the authentically baroque idea of disguise without putting too much of an obstacle to recognition for the reasonably diligent reader. Thus, Digby is always identified by the version of his name used by which he was known to the French, including Descartes; 'Monsieur d'Igby'.⁹⁰ Similarly, Emanuele Teasoro is known as 'Padre Emanuele', and most critics are satisfied that Father Caspar Wanderdrossel is based on a student of Athanasius Kircher, by the name of Father Caspar Schott.⁹¹

The level at which the decision to partly obfuscate these names is taken is not altogether clear. The names have a distancing effect for the modern reader, while not being improbably unorthodox usage for Roberto. We therefore react to them as pseudo-romantic gestures deriving from Eco, rather than extrapolating any particular intention of mystification on the hypothetical level of Roberto's narration. The one instance where we can definitively identify Roberto occluding identification is with his Lady, 'Lilia'. This is where the second significant difference between Roberto's narrative and the model provided by Digby arises.

The motive for Roberto's encryption of 'Lilia' could not be further from the archly demonstrative discretion that leads the baroque lover to obscure his mistress' identity. Allegorical or allusive naming allows topics, particularly forbidden love, to be broached that could not be directly addressed. Digby's relationship with Venetia Stanley did not fall into the category of illicit love, but his redesignation of her as 'Stelliana' served the purpose of allowing the private sphere to be recorded in a relatively decorous manner, not revealing too much of the lady being discussed, and yet permitting easy identification by colleagues. This delicate balance was particularly important for Digby, as the motive for the *Private Memoirs* appears to

⁹⁰ On Descartes and Digby, see Petersson, pp.120-8.

⁹¹ On the identity of Father Caspar see, for example, Capozzi, in *Reading Eco*, p.437, n.21. It should be noted that Kircher himself is a clear model for Father Caspar. Kircher assiduously studied symbolism, and attempted to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphics as divine knowledge. However, in his geological work, *Mundus subterraneus* (Amsterdam, 1664-5), he argued for the importance of evidence and the forensic examination of phenomena. On this point, see Gunnar Eriksson, *The Atlantic Vision: Olaus Rudbeck and Baroque Science* (Canton, Mass.: Science History, 1994), pp.150-2.

have been primarily a defence of Venetia's somewhat tarnished reputation. Digby therefore plays a broadly ironic game for the benefit of his complicit reader, revealing a deal of personal information about his wife while appearing to reveal very little.

For Roberto, the irony in the account of his beloved Lilia works in the opposite direction. He offers increasingly substantial narratives of her and her emotional responses, while knowing almost nothing about her. He does not even know what Lilia's real name is, understanding only that 'it was certainly the precious name of a *précieuse*, and he knew well that such names are given in jest'.⁹² Roberto's uncertainty over names, especially with regard to attractive women, whom he does not have the confidence even to address, has already been amply demonstrated in the farcical episode of his infatuation with the peasant girl in Casale. His behaviour in both of these cases, as he relies on his imagination rather than the limited evidence of his own senses, reinforces the comparison with *Don Quixote* that is implied in all of Roberto's daydreaming. In Casale, Roberto had, rather like Adso in *The Name of the Rose*, to temper his love-sick sighing of the beloved's name with the awkward fact that he was not sure what her name was, having 'learned that the girl's name according to some was Anna Maria Novarese, according to others Francesca'.⁹³ Roberto is too innocent to realise that names can derive from a variety of sources, and have different purposes. 'Francesca', though indeed a proper name, in this case probably refers to the common belief among the locals that the girl is prostituting herself to the French.⁹⁴ Roberto's uncertainty over her name therefore represents how little he knows about the woman he professes to love.

In the same way, the name 'Lilia' covers, for Roberto, not an identity, but the absence of one. Roberto, as appalling a lover as he is a detective, demonstrates his inadequacy in both fields by finding out little or nothing about Lilia, and utterly

⁹² 'era certo il suo nome prezioso di preziosa, e sapeva bene che quei nomi venivano donati per gioco', *The Island of the Day Before*, p.149; p.159.

⁹³ 'aveva saputo che la ragazza si chiamava, secondo alcuni, Anna Maria Novarese, Francesca secondo altri', *The Island of the Day Before*, p.109; p.115.

⁹⁴ She responds to the cat-calls, 'Sì, a sun la pütan'na dei francès, ma ad vui no!', 'Yes, I'm the Frenchmen's whore, but I'm not yours!', *The Island of the Day Before*, p.109; p.115.

misreading those few signs she directs at him. The critical misunderstanding arises when Lilia, forced to take the initiative by Roberto's reticence, whispers to him:

"Signor de la Grive, siete dunque divenuto timido. Non lo eravate quella sera. E dunque, domani di nuovo, sulla stessa scena."

"Monsieur de la Grive, you have become so shy. You were not so that evening. And so, tomorrow afresh, on the same stage."⁹⁵

The editor-narrator reminds us that this can be easily construed as a friendly challenge by a playful *précieuse*, reminding Roberto of his solitary success in the salons, when he held forth on the Powder of Sympathy as a metaphor for love, and prompting him to follow it up. As the narrator says, 'nor could we expect any other challenge from a *précieuse*'.⁹⁶ The reasonable, contextually appropriate interpretation of her words having been established, we are introduced to Roberto's paranoid interpretation, that she was alluding to a love tryst about which he knew nothing. Her words would then mean:

"Siete timido, eppure sere fa non lo siete stato, e mi avete..." (immagino che la gelosia impedisse e al tempo stesso incoraggiasse Roberto a immaginare il seguito di quella frase). "Dunque domani di nuovo, sulla stessa scena, nello stesso luogo segreto."

"You are shy, and yet a few evenings ago you were not, and with me you were--" (I suspect that jealousy forbade and at the same time encouraged Roberto to imagine the rest of that sentence). "So tomorrow, again, on the same stage, in that same secret place."⁹⁷

Far from being equipped to follow, Dupin-like, a convoluted chain of hidden thoughts in another, Roberto fails to understand the intention of a single comment offered to a suitor under the rules of the game of seduction. His misapprehension, so similar to the one that gave birth to Ferrante, similarly derives from Roberto's

⁹⁵ *The Island of the Day Before*, p.166; p.177, my translation.

⁹⁶ 'Né altra sfida potremmo attenderci da una preziosa', *The Island of the Day Before*, p.167; p.178.

⁹⁷ *The Island of the Day Before*, p.167; p.178.

inability to interpret conventional statements. His paranoia derives from the fact that he has difficulty in apprehending how communication may rely on conventional, publicly understood forms rather than specifically personal references. Roberto's paranoid misreading is important for the plot in that it leads directly to the revivification of his imaginary half-brother Ferrante as Lilia's secret lover. In this respect, as everywhere else, Roberto fills the many gaps in his knowledge of Lilia with a fantasy, a wild speculation which, like her very name, he clings onto as though it were the thing itself. The sequel of this move, as throughout the novel, is that the substitute fantasy completely displaces the reality. Roberto is left floundering in a realm of signs of his own invention, with no sense of coherent reality behind it all.

The third and final manner in which Roberto's fantasised autobiography differs from the model offered by Digby springs from this same problem, the lack of a substantive comprehension of the real sequence of events that he is seeking to describe. A well-constructed *roman-à-clef* is a coherent substitutive operation. That is to say, it is a map of the world that declares itself to be a map, offers itself up to the reader for decoding, if only the reader possesses the correct key. This special case of referentiality literalises the sense in which the reader decodes fiction as a transposition of the real world. A key or table of substitutions is required, either hypothetically or in actuality, for accurate interpretation, as one reads a map using the key, or legend, supplied. The *roman-à-clef* stands, then, in a solid semiotic relationship to the world, even while implicitly recognising that this relationship necessarily involves a certain amount of distance and falsity. It is a deception that is controllable because it announces its deceptiveness.

Roberto's half-hearted *roman-sans-clef*, however, has a constantly shifting and radically unstable relationship to the 'real world' that the reader is encouraged to project as existent behind the text. The overall movement is from straightforward descriptive prose, with names presented relatively undisguised, through the stage of abstraction or allegorization, to a fantastic discourse that has lost any definite and measurable connection with the real world.

In this respect, the narrative, as a *roman-à-clef manqué*, is used to bring to the fore the sensations of interpretive difficulty and uncontrolled speculation that are operating on the level of Roberto's own experiences. Of all Eco's novels, this is the

one where the narration most explicitly and programmatically follows the semiotic agenda informing the novel as a whole. In both *The Name of the Rose* and *Foucault's Pendulum* the narrator was implicated in events, and so interpretive problems at the level of the narration were imbued with a genuine narrative interest. In *The Island of the Day Before*, the explicit presence of the narrator as an editing device only serves to introduce various familiar forms of interpretive problem to the narration. This leaves the narrator as an obstructive figure, unable to provide the reader with any ludic pleasures, or to suggest any coherent alternative reading of events, as occurred in *Foucault's Pendulum*.

It is instructive to ask from where the idea for this editorially intrusive narrator derives. Naturally, *Don Quixote's* elaborate editorial distancing device suggests itself, along with all its Romantic descendants, such as Goethe's *Werther*, Foscolo's *Jacopo Ortis*, on to the carefully presented historical romances of Sir Walter Scott and Manzoni's *I promessi sposi*. Of course, Eco's novel is also using the device of the editorial narrator who confirms the truth of the text as a generic signifier. It is the classic narrative strategy of the traveller's tale, found in *Robinson Crusoe* and its descendants, More's *Utopia* and even Jan Potocki's *The Manuscript Found in Zaragoza*. Naturally, Eco's version is a deliberately ironic use of the device, with the editorial narrator frequently interjecting to question Roberto's account, to seek explanations for missing or confused details, and to offer interpretations not occurring or available to Roberto.⁹⁸ As such, it adopts some of the ironising and undermining devices used in the famous nineteenth-century seafaring tales -- the elaborate and evasive narrative nesting found in Conrad, the unexpected distancing effects in Melville's *Moby Dick*, and behind that the skewed narrative structure of Poe's *Arthur Gordon Pym*. In terms of the theme of resistance to interpretation, a particularly obvious point of reference is Conrad's *Lord Jim*, with its insistence on the impenetrability of Jim's personality. We must remember, however, that Eco's

⁹⁸ Of course, the use of an ironically interjecting narratorial voice is familiar in twentieth-century fiction. As well as novels providing fake editorial apparatus, such as Nabokov's *Lolita* and *Pale Fire*, the apparent splitting of the narratorial persona into competing voices is often found in 'classic' postmodernist writers such as John Barth and Thomas Pynchon. Eco's use of the device is notably similar to that of Luigi Malerba, whose use of such a narrator in *Salto mortale* and *Il pianeta azzuro* was discussed in Chapter One.

novel ends on a deliberately constructed point of narrative suspension, with Roberto drifting off on a plank as he imagines himself to be poised between days on the 180° meridian itself. In terms of this deliberately abbreviated resolution, *The Island of the Day Before* most closely resembles the narrative structure of *Arthur Gordon Pym*.

Eco has clearly demonstrated his detailed awareness of the convoluted narrative of Poe's novel, examining it at length in one of his Harvard lectures.⁹ The narrative is apparently introduced by Poe, but when Pym's tale stops short, a narrator who claims not to be Poe steps in, criticising Poe's editorial efforts, and offering some hints as to how the final few chapters should be understood. As Eco recognises, the lop-sided narrative nesting in Poe's novel has a practical origin. Poe published the first two instalments of the story in the *Southern Literary Messenger* of January and February 1837 under his own name. When the complete text appeared later that year, Poe presented it as the work of Pym himself -- in the way that, for example, Defoe had presented *Robinson Crusoe*. He was obliged therefore to add an explanatory Preface, and a carefully managed Note at the end, in order to give a reason for his name being attached to the initial version.

Although it seems that several readers took the story as authentic, 'Pym's' narrative alibi bears little scrutiny. He argues that, fearing disbelief, he agreed to have the story published as a fiction under Poe's name. The narrative suspension produced by the resonance between two, unresolved, narrative ideas is a fortuitous result of Poe's change of mind. We must remember this when assessing what appears to be a postmodernist *mise-en-abîme* in the narrative structure. Notwithstanding the manner in which Eco, for one, uses *Arthur Gordon Pym* to explore narrative levels, it is not clear whether the novel is manipulating these levels or struggling with them.

On the other hand, Eco's reading of the narrative nesting in *Arthur Gordon Pym* as an effect worthy of serious attention is assisted by the analytical tone of the novel, as well as the fact that Poe chooses not to ignore the problem but to highlight it. The novel is characterised by searches, from Pym searching for light and food in his stowaway's 'coffin', his struggle to find a way to read a warning note with no light, the desperate searches for food aboard the wreck of the *Grampus*, all the way to the hieroglyphic discoveries in Tsalal, all demanding interpretation. A novel that

⁹ See *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*, pp.17-21, where Eco attempts to diagrammatically represent the narrative structure of the novel.

demands that its readership participate in this kind of investigation invites investigation of its narrative inconsistencies. The situation is analogous to the manner in which Sherlockians -- enthusiasts for the Sherlock Holmes stories -- pursue narrative lapses in Conan Doyle's stories with extraordinary aggression. The Sherlockians are, or play at being, persuaded that just as Holmes can find a narrative of the crime where all the apparent inconsistencies are resolved, they can achieve the same for the stories themselves. More than this, the basic narrative discrepancy between Dr Watson as the narrator and Conan Doyle as the author is pursued with similar vigour, as though an explanation similar to Poe's for *Arthur Gordon Pym* might be obtained.

Eco's interest in this type of narrative game-playing, and the adoption of various versions of it in his novels, can be attributed to three factors. First, as he indicates for *The Name of the Rose*, there is to some extent a desire to place a defensive shield around the problem of finding a narrative voice. Second, the embedding of narratives is one of the most characteristic devices of fiction that revels in the ludic pleasure of narration, from *Don Quixote* to Borges and Nabokov, and on to the destabilisation of the concept of 'author' in Paul Auster's postmodernist detective stories. It is an economical way of effectively multiplying the narrative, generating fresh effects of sense and ambiguity in the text while only depending on the most obvious characteristic of the text -- that it, asking to be read as truth, is fiction. Third, as this implies, the narrative play generated is between reality and fiction, using an apparent jeopardisation of the status of the text to bring to the forefront its status as fiction *qua* fiction.

Conclusion

Roberto's story is one of exploration in which nothing is explored, in which no great discoveries are made. It is a story of intrigue and blackmail where there is nothing over which to intrigue. Roberto is blackmailed for actions that he never took, in order to force him to discover a secret that does not even work. Like all narratives of exploration, and all narratives of deception and intrigue, Roberto's story resembles a detective story in its emphasis on the process of disclosure. The

consistent focus on the failure to discover is a very exact focus on the limitations of the process of detection. There is, however, little in the way of the action that we might expect to find in a narrative of discovery. Roberto's attempts to discover the secret of the *Amaryllis* are largely glossed over, and the drama of the shipwreck is conspicuous in its absence from the retelling, an anaphora of some significance. Even the siege of Casale, in which Roberto can expect to experience the thrill of combat, is discovered to be a zone in which self-promotion, deceit and disloyalty are more effective weapons of war than the grand gestures of chivalric combat. The only chivalrous men known to Roberto -- his father and Saint-Savin -- are fruitlessly killed.

The rational faculties are, in Roberto's experience, baffled at every turn. The processes of detection fail or produce aberrant results, and so Roberto is increasingly tempted to replace fruitless attempts at detection with increasingly baroque speculations.¹⁰⁰ As we have seen, although there is a narrative interest in these speculations, they are understood to be inevitably unhelpful, diversionary, and barren.

We can posit a basic tripartite structure to the narrative of detection -- investigation, hypothesis, and solution. To adopt some of the terminology that Eco himself prefers, we can characterise these as observation, abduction and meta-abduction -- the last of which is the confirmation of the validity of the hypothesis made in the abductive stage.¹⁰¹ Eco has already presented novels in which the abductive hypothesis of the detective is found to be partial or inadequate (*The Name*

¹⁰⁰ Borges, that notably provocative and partial definer of concepts, wrote that 'I should define as baroque that style which deliberately exhausts (or tries to exhaust) all its possibilities and which borders on its own parody' (Preface to the 1954 edition of *Historia universal de la infamia* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1954), translated by Norman Thomas di Giovanni as *A Universal History of Infamy* (London: Lane, 1973), p.11). It is intriguing to place this personal definition against historical or artistic definitions of the baroque in reading Eco's fiction.

¹⁰¹ See 'Horns, Hooves, Insteps', in *The Sign of Three*, especially pp.204-7. Although Eco relies heavily on Peirce's terminology, he adapts it to his own purposes, and the precise sense in which terms such as 'hypothesis' are being used is not always clear. I am dividing the processes of observation and abductive hypothesis from each other for the purposes of uncovering a difference of emphasis between Eco's novels. This distinction is blurred in Eco's semiotics because he, quite correctly, reasons that the observation of a sign implicitly involves an abductive hypothesis of some type. See *The Sign of Three*, p.206.

of the Rose) and in which the mystery supposedly solved by detective work is shown to be questionable or non-existent (*Foucault's Pendulum*). This last is equivalent to questioning the stage of meta-abduction. Now, with *The Island of the Day Before*, Eco tackles the remaining element of the tripartite structure of detection. The novel is seen to repeatedly demonstrate inadequacies in observation. This operates literally, as in the specific optical problems that Roberto faces in trying to see the island or the coral reef. It also covers the more technical sense in which observation is a stage in the process of abductive detection. As William of Baskerville, following Eco, observed in *The Name of the Rose*, 'the first rule in deciphering a message is to guess what it means'.¹⁰² Eco, in his role as theoretical semiotician, is as aware as any other post-structuralist that there is no such thing as 'simple observation'. It is always in some sense a speculation about the nature of reality. In questioning the ability to observe, *The Island of the Day Before* is not so much highlighting contingent failures of observation as insisting upon the speculative nature of the act.¹⁰³ Eco has developed a metaphor of reading as a series of inferential walks, as explored in *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*. Similarly, in *The Island of the Day Before*, observation is a series of speculative inferences. The boldness of the novel, a self-endangering boldness, is the rigour with which it creates and enforces a character most of whose inferential speculations are false.

This is the polar opposite of the fictional realms of detective fiction in which all inferential speculations (those visible to the reader, at least) are right, or at a minimum, reasonable. As such, polemically placed on the opposite side of the world to the traditional detective story, *The Island of the Day Before* equally risks the same problems of improbability and even tedium. Nevertheless, the interpretive problems and devices with which Eco fills the novel are characteristic of the time in which it is set. There is a deliberate evocation of what Eco takes to be the spirit of the Baroque.

¹⁰² 'la prima regola per decifrare un messaggio è indovinare cosa voglia dire', *The Name of the Rose*, p.171; p.166.

¹⁰³ In fact, by the criteria which Eco puts forward in 'Horns, Hooves, Insteps', the novel primarily concerns creative abductions which are not then supported by the necessary meta-abductions (*The Sign of Three*, p.207). It is a characteristic of the novel that these creative abductions are ultimately linked with the act of observation itself.

The Baroque, as represented in *The Island of the Day Before*, is an explosion of ideas, styles, questions, that posits fresh solutions to problems without then cutting those speculations down to size. Eco's Baroque is populated with competing madresses; wild, enormous plans; grand narratives galore. Even since *The Open Work*, Eco has been one of those who has observed the correspondences between the Baroque and contemporary aesthetics.¹⁰⁴ Eco's assessment then of the Baroque as a form opposed to the 'static and unquestionable definitiveness of the classical Renaissance form' evidently still informs his use of the term by the time of *The Island of the Day Before*.¹⁰⁵ The Baroque's 'search for kinetic excitement and illusory effect leads to a situation where the plastic mass in the Baroque work of art never allows a privileged, definitive, frontal view;' he argues, 'rather, it induces the spectator to shift his position continuously in order to see the work in constantly new aspects'.¹⁰⁶ Baroque spirituality, according to Eco, anticipates the modern because 'here, for the first time, man opts out of the canon of authorized responses and finds that he is faced (both in art and in science) by a world in a fluid state which requires corresponding creativity on his part'.¹⁰⁷ As much as Eco seems impressed by the reorientation toward new interpretations of reality (an emphasis on, and belief in, the power of creative abduction), it is the confidence of the Baroque that these responses can encapsulate reality that is left open to question in the novel. The Baroque viewer's response to a work of art, for Eco, is to see it 'as a potential mystery to be solved, a role to fulfil, a stimulus to quicken his imagination'.¹⁰⁸ The anxiety expressed in *The Island of the Day Before* is that, while this stimulus should be enjoyed, it should not be mistaken for a mystery of nature, a riddle that, when unravelled, will tell us more about the world.

The other interpretive control felt in the novel, largely through absence, is the role of interpretive communities. Eco's theoretical stance at this stage accepts that

¹⁰⁴ See Eco's Foreword to Omar Calabrese, *Neo-Baroque: A Sign of the Times*, translated by Charles Lambert (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

¹⁰⁵ *The Open Work*, p.7.

¹⁰⁶ *The Open Work*, p.7.

¹⁰⁷ *The Open Work*, p.7.

¹⁰⁸ *The Open Work*, p.7.

any public text will be interpreted by readers using the 'social treasury' of language.

He elaborates that what he means by social treasury is:

not only a given language as a set of grammatical rules, but also the whole encyclopedia that the performances of that language have implemented, namely, the cultural conventions that that language has produced and the very history of the previous interpretations of many texts, comprehending the text that the reader is in the course of reading.¹⁰⁹

A possible objection to this attempt to negotiate between theories of purely objective and purely subjective interpretation is that it appears to posit a single, coherent interpretive community. It is far from clear, however, that Eco either is, or would wish to, be making this claim. In fact, as far as *The Island of the Day Before* is concerned, there is an implicit acknowledgement that different interpretive communities operate in parallel. Part of the problem for Roberto is that he has had his feet in many interpretive camps, so to speak. Before he finds himself abandoned, isolated from any communities on the *Daphne*, his interpretive strategies are visibly influenced by the communities in which he finds himself, from the self-preserving scepticism of the soldiers at Casale to the aestheticised theorising of Paris, the paranoid atmosphere surrounding Cardinal Mazarin, to the cosmological fancies of Father Caspar. Roberto, the epitome of the *alazon*, the sponge absorbing all information given him, does not actually move from one interpretive community to the next; he accrues interpretive strategies which he applies as he feels appropriate. He wildly transfers ideas from one realm to another, employs metaphors to further his understanding of topics without the rigorous comprehension of any particular field necessary to realise the limitations that accompany them. Roberto is left producing endless metaphors of his situation, considering almost every possible speculation whilst trusting none. In this context, Roberto's very name, Roberto della Griva Pozzo di San Patrizio, is meaningful. 'Pozzo', though a credible name for an Italian, immediately suggests Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, which features a character of this name. It is certainly possible to identify a Beckett-like quality in Roberto's absurd situation, and his fruitless wait for some definite meaning to

¹⁰⁹ *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p.67-8.

emerge from it. More significantly, however, in Italian, for something to be 'come il Pozzo di San Patrizio' is for it to be endless.¹¹⁰ Roberto, in that his Baroque sensibility indicates certain aspects of the modern world, is a marker of what Eco consistently regards as the dangerous edge of post-structuralism -- the transformation of a Peircean 'unlimited semiosis' into mere endless speculation. This is a transformation that Eco is at pains to oppose.¹¹¹

This opposition is marked by the presence within the novel of speculations that are measurable. The scientific speculations covered in the text are capable of being judged by the reader as though they were meta-abductive guesses. The problem is that the speculations are mostly wrong. The novel is notably packed with speculations, machines, devices, hypotheses. Scientific results are utterly absent. For example, Father Caspar, having apparently invented a diving bell, uses it in an attempt to reach the island. Roberto lowers him into the water and waits. Then, nothing. It is significant that Roberto cannot even discover Father Caspar's fate. It may seem obvious to the reader that Caspar's device is little more than a death-trap, but Roberto is left suspended in a world of possibilities, fictional alternatives between which he cannot choose. In a more prosaic sense, the experiment is an utter failure, because nothing is learnt, not even a reason for its failure. In a situation characteristic of all of the scientific experiments in the novel, results are not gained. Their hypotheses, essential for the cultural learning process of science, are not brought home, either in the physical sense, or the logical one. They remain forever suspended in a state of ambiguity.

The novel is a journal of hopeful hypotheses untested in the real world, which are therefore failures. Roberto becomes the prime producer of such unverified hypotheses, leading to his auto-shipwrecking on the *punto fijo* -- poised between hypotheses, suspended in time, in the sense of a refusal to be tested. The narrative itself, so full of tentative inferences and untested propositions, occupies a zone where any hypothesis is in operation. Hypotheses as to Roberto's actions, the reality of his encounters and writings, his fate, the fate of his manuscripts, all remain suspended at the novel's close.

¹¹⁰ See Rocco Capozzi, 'Intertextuality, Metaphors, and Metafiction as Cognitive Strategies in *The Island of the Day Before*', in *Reading Eco*, p.437, n.26.

¹¹¹ See *The Limits of Interpretation*, pp.28-32.

As much as *The Island of the Day Before* owes to *Arthur Gordon Pym*, especially the basic dramatic situation of the shipwreck upon a ship, the thematics of suspension and imprisonment show the influence of Italo Calvino. The paradox of being stuck immobile on a ship is Poe's, but the presence of the island, unreachable from the prison of the ship (and replicated even more clearly in Roberto's fantasy of Ferrante's prison), suggests Calvino's doubling of prison and island in 'Il Conte di Montecristo'. Roberto, like Dantès in Calvino's story, speculates on every possible version of events in a desperate attempt to find one that can extricate him from his situation. He seeks the key, the perfect map.

In Calvino's version of the Château d'If, the map of the castle transmutes into the map of the island being sought. The unreachable becomes confounded with the inescapable. In the same way, Roberto becomes trapped within a sea of resemblances, with all currents of thought washing him toward his unattainable object of desire. The novel ultimately takes the form of a cautionary fable on the subject of the interpretive excesses of post-structuralism. As in *The Name of the Rose* and *Foucault's Pendulum*, this fable is not concerned with the interpretive difficulty of moving to a post-structuralist world-view; the danger of believing in nothing. Rather, it is part of a debate within the post-structuralist situation, or perhaps within Eco himself, about the concomitant danger of believing in everything, rejecting nothing. The semiotic impact of this problem has already been approached by Eco in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* and *The Limits of Interpretation*. The problem for the novel is that it depends for its interest on the very speculative pleasures that Eco has found himself arguing against. As a work of art, as a novel describing speculations rejected by history, it never shakes itself free of this authorial division. *The Island of the Day Before* is the novel where Eco's theoretical work sabotages the ludic freedom of the fiction.

The looming presence over the text of the interfering, destabilising editor-narrator substantially reflects this interference of the theory with the fiction. The mere presence of this modern voice, and the nature of the interpretive problems it seeks to raise, will bring along for many readers the entire weight of Eco's semiotic work. The narrative therefore repeatedly lifts the reader out of what is otherwise an essentially naturalistic narrative in order to appeal to already-formed expectations of

a post-structuralist arbitrariness of signification, and, more importantly, a classically postmodern narrative undecidability.

The problem is that these moments of post-structuralist narratorial intervention are, in general, inadequately linked to the naturalistic narrative beneath. Even as the intrusive editor-narrator seeks to introduce levels of undecidability into the universe of the narrative, these are rejected by the essentially coherent and ontologically reliable narrative that has already been provided. Eco's naturalistic account of a muddled and eccentric mind, in the form of Roberto della Griva, is already adequately explained by the peculiarities of his education in a Europe struggling to integrate the new perspectives offered by the baroque with the demands for testability that will be made by the new science. This account is coherent and comprehensive enough to render the attempt to introduce post-structuralist instabilities not only inadequate, but also unwelcome.

CONCLUSION

At the start of this study I warned that I would emphasise formal concerns, both in the analysis of the formal characteristics of the detective narrative, and in the recognition that Eco himself differentiates his fiction from his theory on formal rather than thematic grounds. It is, of course, my belief that these two aspects are intimately linked. I have endeavoured throughout the examination of each of Eco's novels to demonstrate how in their thematics and in their narrative structure they concern themselves with the same issues of signification, interpretation and narrative that may also be found in the detective narrative.

In certain respects, this similitude is self-evident. To the extent that Eco's novels exhibit themselves as narratives of detection, they must share at least some of these structural concerns. As already noted, the detective narrative offers itself as a narrative form with unparalleled susceptibility to a semiotic approach. Not only does the detective narrative appear as an analogue of academic research (a comparison made explicit in *Foucault's Pendulum*, but present in all three of Eco's novels), but it can also operate as a metaphor for the process of reading itself. In other words, the narrative of detection can focus the reader either on the process of reading (as the reader follows in admiration the guesses of the detective), or on the process of writing (as the reader competitively attempts to second-guess not the detective, but the author). This is closely related to the duality of stories identified by Todorov: the story of the crime and the story of the investigation.¹ As we will see, this double focus, the detective story's ability to sustain at once two levels of reading, is at the heart of its utility for Eco.

Throughout our examination of the models of detective narrative intertextually offered by Eco's novels it has become increasingly apparent that the form is, in essence, paranoid. The importance of the scholastic principle of *adequatio rei et intellectus* to fictional detectives from Poe's Dupin and Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes through the Golden Age of detective fiction is, essentially, little different from the paranoid belief that the world is modelled in accordance with one's

¹ See Todorov, *The Poetics of Prose*, pp.43-5.

interpretation of it. In both cases the order of the perceived world can only be resolved through the person of the interpreter. For the paranoiac, the world is actually structured with immediate relevance to the self. In the detective narrative, the hidden order of the narrative world is only ever revealed to, and through, the medium of the detective, who is able to uncover an interpretation of events inaccessible to anyone else. Furthermore, the presumption that there is a comprehensible order to the world, while common to many types of narrative, becomes the guiding principle of the standard detective narrative.

At the same time as the detective story displays consistently paranoid narrative worlds, it is also marked by a profoundly ironic sensibility. This occurs through the assumption in the detective narrative that the initial interpretation of events is inevitably inadequate, and does not reveal the real intention of the utterer (i.e. the criminal). The movement typical of the genre is the demonstration of the inadequacy of a supposed interpretive structure, which appears to throw the naturalistic world offered in the text into unstructured chaos, only for a new, all-encompassing structure to be offered, finally, in its place.

Any account of the formal structure of narratives of detection that ignores this transaction between very different views of the interpretability of the world is, therefore, seriously flawed. The detective narrative operates through the maintenance of tension between the paranoid and the ironic (or, more precisely, the ironic elements implicit in paranoid thought). The paranoid view presupposes a Structure, a complete, coherent and comprehensible system into which all events fit, which broadly corresponds to the 'magical' of Borges. The ironic is sceptical, perhaps infinitely so. It undermines Structure, demonstrating that coherent explanations are inadequate or false, leaving only an endless sequence of uninterpretable events, the uncontrollable and infinite operations of Borges' 'natural'.

In Eco's narratives of detection this transaction between the magical and the natural, the paranoid and the ironised, is both maintained and pushed to the forefront, ready for experimentation. In *The Name of the Rose* it is seen in the *alazon-eiron* relationship between Adso and William that is typical of the Golden Age detective story, where Adso's dreams and errors -- interpretive mistakes that are nevertheless indicative of how other monks will interpret -- are elevated to significant elements of the narrative. At the same time, a tension is maintained between a

paranoid interpretation of events as diabolically inspired that makes perfect sense to the monks (including even William of Baskerville), and an ironic scepticism that chimes with the expectations of a readership used to postmodernist detective fiction.

In *Foucault's Pendulum* the positions of *eiron* and *alazon* are initially occupied by the Editors and the Diabolicals respectively. The tragic fall mapped by the novel is that of the Editors' gradual descent into alazonic credulity, enthusiasm and paranoia. It thus offers a contrast to the manner in which *The Name of the Rose* maintains a healthy balance between the two drives, offering the possibility of a Wittgensteinian practical enquiry balanced with an awareness of its limited applicability. *Foucault's Pendulum*, like Eco's first novel, attempts to locate a moderate position between interpretive paranoia and interpretive irony (scepticism), but it does so from the opposite direction, by portraying the consequences of interpretive immoderacy at either extreme. It uses the Editors to portray a familiar postmodernist position of extreme irony, the belief in nothing, at the same time as it uses the Diabolicals to indicate paranoid suspicion, which is another trope typical of postmodernism. Of all of the novels, it is possible to correspond *Foucault's Pendulum* most closely with Eco's criticisms of the perceived excesses of some post-structuralist theory, in that both the Editors' irony and the Diabolicals' paranoia lead to a position of confusion attained through an endless interpretation.

The moderate position, where the ability to generate workable hypotheses is tempered by an awareness of their ultimate inadequacy, is formed primarily in *Foucault's Pendulum* through its suggestive absence. Only Lia, performing precise scholarly investigations that strictly delimit their own applicability, offers anything like a model of good interpretive behaviour. It is noticeable that her practical, liberal humanist interpretive assumptions are allowed to operate effectively within the novel, just as Casaubon's final focus on material surface and immediate experiences, such as the taste of peaches and the sight of vines, is allowed to stand within a tradition of Italian realism that sees primal good in the simplicity of the rural landscape.

The Island of the Day Before attempts to set up a different relationship between the paranoid and the ironic, with the overenthusiastic speculations of Roberto della Griva and Father Caspar isolated from those few sceptical, ironic voices, such as the poet Saint-Savin, who might keep them from paranoia. The analytic, ironic presence, the *eiron* to Roberto's uncritical *alazon*, comes in only on the level of the anonymous

editorial voice. This encourages the reader to compare what A. Rupert Hall has called 'the extravagance of seventeenth-century science' unfavourably with contemporary standards of scientific knowledge.² Of course, just as *Foucault's Pendulum* relies upon the narrative pleasures offered by its stories of the paranoid and the conspiratorial, in *The Island of the Day Before* some entertainment is obtained from the more preposterous machines and scientific experiments described, particularly the disastrous demonstration of why Galileo's *celatone* would be unsuitable for shipboard use. Crucially, however, the novel separates out the creative and analytic processes, with the progressively more paranoid speculations of Roberto and Father Caspar the subject of patronising commentary from the narratorial voice. The balance between the paranoid and the ironic that is subject to carefully delimited play in the previous two novels becomes, in *The Island of the Day Before*, a narrative of the inevitable failures of two paranoiacs, placed under an editorial voice that emphasises their inadequacy. The novel offers a series of short-lived speculations which between them cannot offer the sustained narrative pleasure of coherence and meaning that Borges would call the magical. In this sense, *The Island of the Day Before* fails to offer a sustained tension between ironic and paranoid interpretations of the narrative world precisely to the extent to which it diverges from the basic model offered by the detective narrative.

The narrative of detection maintains a tension between the creative and the analytic, structure and deconstruction, the expansive and the contractive, between Borges' magical and natural. Borges claimed that the novel could only find integrity in the magical, which is to say that narrative itself is essentially paranoid. Of course, the value of this identification lies in its acknowledgement that, contrarily, narrative often exhibits a sincere determination not to be paranoid, and instead to portray the infinite and uncontrollable operations of which a naturally disordered reality may be said to consist. The antagonism between these two drives has been seen in works of literary Realism, which attempt to address both simultaneously. Modernist texts, in response to the same tension, ostentatiously present an atomised universe, and postmodernist fiction tends either to take this atomization even further, or to impose an arbitrary narrative coherence on a world in an aggressively paranoid fashion. Eco,

² A. Rupert Hall, *From Galileo to Newton* (New York: Dover, 1981), p.29.

stepping between these options, all of which are familiar to him and to his readership, nervously toys with the paranoid pleasures of narrative, always rendered anxious by an awareness of its falsity, its inapplicability to the real world.

Hence, in *The Island of the Day Before*, the copious speculations of Roberto della Griva and Father Caspar are undermined by a strong sense of their wastefulness. Eco sees a moral culpability in a complete surrender to the paranoid, an utter abandonment of the narrative to the seductions of the 'sick Spinozist universe'. The question in each novel is whether a balance can be maintained between paranoia and irony, as in the detective narrative. In other words, it is a question of whether the narrative orders which the novel playfully offers up can compete with Eco's undoubtedly strong conviction of the reliability of scientific interpretation.

This issue is displayed in Eco's fiction through its rendering of both scientific and detective investigation in terms of Peirce's theory of abduction. Peirce's posited third form of interpretive logic is an operation complementary to deduction and induction. Where deduction predicts with absolute certainty a particular result from a case of a rule that is known to be true, induction seeks to generalise a true rule from the result of a particular case (or, more likely, several cases). While true deduction is of limited application beyond axiomatic logic, induction is familiar as a part of the hypothetico-inductive process by which scientific inquiry is usually described. Abduction, however, provides the other element of classic scientific procedure, the element of hypothesis.³ In this, it shares a procedure with the detective narrative. The classic study of Peirce's theory of abduction parallels Sherlock Holmes with scientific hypotheses to 'show that the method of science has much in common with the method of detectives'.⁴ That parallel is eloquently illustrated in Eco's novels, from William of Baskerville worrying over the testability of his Holmesian hypotheses, through the dangerously unfalsifiable hypotheses displayed in *Foucault's Pendulum*, to the incessant promotion of hypotheses with no concern for their testing in *The Island of the Day Before*.

In each case, Eco's fiction emphasises the basic abductive procedure of the detective narrative -- the sensational and risky hypothesis of a state of affairs by the

³ Peirce also used the terms 'hypothesis' and 'retroduction' interchangeably with 'abduction'.

⁴ K.T. Fann, *Peirce's Theory of Abduction*, p.58.

detective -- and exposes its reliance on assumptions of the capability of the human mind for making valid hypotheses. This paranoid assumption was willingly adopted by the classic detective narrative, but increasingly called into question as the genre was adopted by writers with an interest in highlighting epistemological limitations. Eco joins these writers in questioning the operation of the principle *adequatio rei et intellectus*. In the Golden Age detective narrative the detective's spectacular hypothesis is preceded by an apparent disorder, which is resolved at the very moment of the announcement of the hypothesis itself. Eco follows a series of writers, including Borges and Nabokov, who take the moment of hypothesis not as the end of the detective narrative, but as its starting point.

It is at this point that Eco's insistence on the distinction between the formulation of a hypothesis (abduction) and the measurement or test of that hypothesis against the world (meta-abduction) becomes significant. In Chapter Four I objected that abductive guesses are only meaningful to the extent that they are guesses about the nature of the real world, rendering this distinction unnecessary. In fact, while this objection holds in familiar areas of inquiry such as science, philosophy, and also in semiotics, there is no logical necessity for it within the realm of fiction. In fact, fiction may be understood precisely as narrative ostensibly concerning real states of affairs where any abductive speculation about those affairs is not met with a requirement for meta-abductive testing.

It is notable that Eco, a theorist accustomed to testing his hypotheses, addresses in his fiction this defining aspect of narrative fiction. His concerns about the status and the role of fiction work themselves out in the realm of meta-abduction, where fiction diverges from the real world. Eco's fictions of detection focus in an eminently practical way on the necessity of meta-abductive testing, as though the fictional narratives were operating within a real world. There is, therefore, a particular concentration on the moment when the investigating figure moves (or fails to move) from speculation to action. This division of behaviour between thought and action, hypothesis and testing, has been in evidence since we looked, in Chapter One, at Eco's relationship to the *neoavanguardia*. We saw there how Eco understands the failure of the *Gruppo 63* to engage with the events of 1968 as a failure to move from theory to action, or rather, the rendering redundant of theory in the face of the practical tests of strike and protest. The absolute nature of this distinction between

intellection and action may well remind us of Calvino's similarly irreconcilable division of the two in his story 'Il Conte di Montecristo'. However, where Calvino appears to revel in the ludic possibilities offered by the separation of hypothesis from testing, which frees the speculating mind to imagine any structure whatever, Eco is concerned with the necessity of marrying the two together, even as he is writing fiction that, strictly speaking, does not require it.

Turning back to the disjunction between activity and intellection that became the crisis point of the *neoavanguardia*, it is informative to look at this also in terms of the detective story. The basic difference between the Golden Age and the hard-boiled detective story (a rather general, but nevertheless functional distinction) can be formulated as a move from hypothesis to action, with the Golden Age detective model being one of repose, of abstraction, of thought. In the most extreme case, frequently mentioned by Eco, Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe never has to leave his house in order to solve the crime puzzles he is set by his clients. Instead he sends out his assistant, Archie, to gather the required information, before combining the data to find a solution in the monastic space of his own home. A similar thing happens with the parodic stories of Borges and Bioy-Casares, *Six problems for Don Isidro Parodi*, the emblematic, parodic version of the detective story as pure, non-material mental game.

The Name of the Rose broadly fits this model of the detective as abstract thinker, emphasised in the pairing of Jorge and William as the Golden Age pair of criminal and detective, both involved in identifying a structure in the world around them that is invisible and inaccessible to anyone else. William is allowed to behave as an ironically anachronistic foreshadowing of a modern progressive liberal, adapting his thought to a scientific procedure. Meanwhile, his double, Jorge, is the man hidden in his room in the labyrinthine library, blindly scheming, and attempting to puzzle out the meaning of the world like a truly Borgesian detective. This culminates in his final conclusion that he himself is the agent of cosmic order. The dispute between William and Jorge over whether this order is a divine or a diabolical one, while replete with meaning within the moral framework set up in the novel, is irrelevant in terms of the narrative structure. It simply means that both agents eventually find a coherence to their world that meets their expectations, which are absolutely the paranoid expectations of the detective narrative. The irony of this final return to a

dominant structure in *The Name of the Rose* is cleverly and effectively masked by the post-structuralist rhetoric and indicators which Eco can deploy over the narrative. This culminates in William's quotation of Wittgenstein translated into Middle High German: 'er muoz gelîchesame die leiter abewerfen, sô er an ir ufgestigen'.⁵ This is a typically Ecovian piece of play, the identification of which flatters the reader, and so diverts attention from the fact that the use of Wittgenstein here is disingenuous. William quotes from the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* on the necessity of casting away the ladder after one has climbed it (indicating that any interpretive structure must be discarded once it has served its purpose). However, while such statements from William suggest a final point in his interpretive speculations that would appeal to many late twentieth century readers, William has in fact been allowed to formulate his solution to the mystery in terms that rely upon the apocalyptic theology in which all of the monks are enmeshed. He identifies Jorge as the Devil. Although this is formulated loosely enough for the reader to understand this as a metaphor for blind, humourless autocracy, within the naturalistic narrative world that obtains even at the novel's end, this identification must also be taken as indicating a real identity, and the solution as a real solution made within the conventions of the Golden Age detective narrative.

On the other hand, *Foucault's Pendulum* works far more with the active model of detection; with spies, protagonists who act often instantaneously, and often with violence. As we saw, Casaubon thinks of himself in terms of Dashiell Hammett's hard-boiled detective, Sam Spade. The hard-boiled detective story does not involve the detective sitting back and considering, it involves the rapid, almost instinctual response to unexpected events. Instead of analyzing and reconstructing a completed set of actions, the hard-boiled detective is himself a part of the series of events. While this alteration is easy to see in Raymond Chandler and many other 'pulp' writers, it is less clear in the work of Dashiell Hammett. Because his narratives tend

⁵ *The Name of the Rose*, p.495; p.492. The line is rendered from *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. Logisch-philosophische Abhandlung* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1964), section 6.54, p.115. It translates as: 'He must cast the ladder away, so to speak, after he has climbed up on it'. See John Churchill, 'Wittgenstein's Ladder', *American Notes and Queries* 23 (Sept-Oct 1984), 21-2, and also Werner Hüllen, 'Semiotics Narrated: Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', *Semiotica* 64 (1987), 41-57, 48.

to have their detectives remaining in the same locations, Hammett's narratives can appear similar to Nero Wolfe sitting in his house (or, indeed, Mycroft Holmes sitting, deliberately isolated, in the Diogenes Club). In Hammett, however, the hard-boiled action has simply moved to the location of the detective, rather than hiding in the haunting cityscapes of Raymond Chandler. Hammett is more sophisticated than his successor in that he is able to elaborate the way in which complex action, with the active intervention of the detective, will result in a more profoundly paranoid situation, in which the locus becomes the detective himself. In Hammett's narratives we stay with the detective, upon whom the clues and red herrings descend, fighting for attention, and disputing each other, so that the true location of the action becomes once again the detective's mind. This time, though, the detective's mind is the subject, rather than the dispassionately perceiving object of the Golden Age detective.

There is also something significant in the fact that the detectives of both Chandler and Hammett tend to blunder their way through, arriving at the truth more through persistence and resilience than through a gifted insight into the mechanisms of the world. The whole mechanism of *adequatio rei et intellectus* is, if not exactly rejected, downgraded in importance. The hard-boiled story rejects the mystique of the Golden Age detective, who instantaneously understands the situation from the very beginning, with a flash of insight. Indeed, these detectives may not really know the true nature of their world until the very end. In the meantime they keep on their toes, keep on responding to the immediate events, and defer the final declaration of their hypothesis until such a time as all of the layers have been exposed by the activities of the protagonists and then stripped away.

In essence, then, the two major models of detective action make different assumptions about the nature and comprehensibility of the world. The earlier, incessantly abstracting model, the Golden Age detective narrative, implicitly relies on the correlation of the mind with the object, as suggested by Holquist. This is as much to say that if a problem is mentally pursued with enough talent and vigour, the mind will grasp an interpretation of events that is guaranteed by a Peircean analogue between the human mind and the world itself. By contrast, the hard-boiled and spy genres tend to prioritise training, instincts, experience and 'street-smarts', which all enable you act in such a way that you maximise your chances within a dangerous

field where there is no immediate means of testing interpretations. It is a case of the body, rather than the mind, being attuned to the world. If we consider the anxiety felt by Belbo in *Foucault's Pendulum* over his failure to become truly involved in the two noble political actions of his time -- the Resistance and the 1968 uprisings - - then this really does rest on his failure to move from a realm of abstracted, ironic, intellection to a world of straightforward action. It is for this reason that Belbo's repeated intertextual reference to Conrad's *Lord Jim* is so important. Belbo, like Jim, could never forgive himself for failing, for whatever reason, to instinctively respond in the correct fashion at a moment of crisis.

Curiously, in *Foucault's Pendulum*, Belbo's failure to escape from the recognisably postmodernist trap of automatic and incessant (in Booth's terminology, 'infinite') irony contains within it a qualified admiration for paranoia.⁶ As I noted in Chapter One, the Resistance provides one of the earliest, most powerful, and unusually positive modern images of a conspiracy: a group whose premise is essentially paranoid. For those on the Italian left, a similar positive valuation holds for the various groups activating for social and political change in the late nineteen sixties. Therefore, at the same time that *Foucault's Pendulum* makes easy points at the expense of the paranoid occultism and conspiratorial thought so popular in recent years, it displays a more urgent and painful anxiety about the ironic stance familiar in many proclaimedly postmodernist thinkers and writers. There is a strong sense that it is the ironists who have removed the possibility of a positive, politically meaningful paranoia; a paranoia that may lead to a rejection of consumerism or of media-manipulated politics (such as that almost perfected by Silvio Berlusconi). Yet again, *Foucault's Pendulum* is seen to lament the loss of a meaningful middle ground, a moderate position where a measured sense of paranoid suspicion can blend with irony to produce a healthy scepticism. Given the disappearance of this Edenic middle ground in the displaced apocalyptic fantasy of *Foucault's Pendulum*, if irony still seems to remain a healthier option than paranoia, it is because irony recognises the existence of something outside the text, in the form of the imagined author who formulates the ironies. The paranoid viewpoint, while it also assumes a hidden meaning, continues to search for it primarily within the text. Whereas ironic reading

⁶ See Wayne C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony*, pp.253-77.

works from the audience's knowledge of the utterer to generate a more probable meaning than the apparent one, paranoid reading reverses this process. It identifies ambiguities or lacunae in the text from which it projects a theoretical utterer capable of explaining these.

There are three observations to be made about this distinction. Firstly, there is clearly only a fine difference between an ironic reading and a paranoid one. The audience's knowledge of the utterer may be itself a product of the text. The judgement between ironic and paranoid will probably depend on a sense of moderate interpretation similar to that for which Eco is arguing. Secondly, as has already been observed, there is a certain similarity between paranoid textual interpretation and academic criticism. It is this similarity that allows Eco to rely on the Hermetic and paranoid reading of the Diabolicals in *Foucault's Pendulum* as an analogue of some deconstructionist literary criticism. A similar parallel is more explicitly developed in the analyses of Hermetic readings of Dante developed under Eco's tutelage and published in *L'idea deforme*.⁷ Thirdly, it once again highlights the paranoid nature of the detective narrative, in this case by reference to its textualism.

The detective narrative, of all genres, has the most simplistic and determined relationship to reality. In effect, the detective story allows for no reality outside its own text. This is emphasised in Paul Auster's avowedly postmodernist version of the detective narrative, *City of Glass*, where we are told what the protagonist admired in the detective narrative:

What he liked about these books was their sense of plenitude and economy. In the good mystery there is nothing wasted, no sentence, no word that is not significant. And even if it is not significant, it has the potential to be so -- which amounts to the same thing. The world of the book comes to life, seething with possibilities, with secrets and contradictions. Since everything seen or said, even the slightest, most trivial thing, can bear a connection to the outcome of the story, nothing must be overlooked.⁸

⁷ Maria Pia Pozzato (ed.), *L'idea deforme: Interpretazioni esoteriche di Dante* (Milan: Bompiani, 1992).

⁸ Auster, *The New York Trilogy*, p.9.

Just as every textual element of a detective story is potentially significant, there is no possibility of significance outside the textual, beyond the elementary competence of the reader needed to make sense of the text at all. This is the famous principle of 'fair play', defined by Edmund Crispin as the textual situation where 'the reader is given all the clues needed to enable him to anticipate the solution by the exercise of his logic and his common sense'.⁹ It is noticeable that Crispin, a devotee of fair play in his detective fiction, feels the need to apologise in advance to his reader for occasionally requiring of him or her 'some fragments of technical or near technical information on about the level of the average newspaper quiz'.¹⁰

'Fair play' demands, then, with the exception of general knowledge and reading ability, no intrusion of external competence into the inexorable internal logic of the plot. Complex psychological states, rare chemical, scientific, technological, anthropological or medical elements, mystical, aesthetic or intensely personal experiences are alien to the detective narrative, and can only ever be brought in as a central conceit, a gimmick designed to confuse or trick the reader, before finally being rationalised as part of the objectivised, naturalistic world being created. All that is left is a world of material causes and effects that is precisely commensurate with the text itself. In the Golden Age detective narrative, the map is the territory, the text perfectly refers to the world it seeks to describe. On those rare occasions when we are asked to imagine that world extending beyond the confines of the text, as in the 'missing cases' habitually referred to at the start of Sherlock Holmes stories, the purpose is to assure us that the world beyond the text is nothing but an ongoing series of similar cases, all ultimately submittable to the same logic of detection as the present one. Hence also, in part, the appeal of series of cases featuring the same detective. With each subsequent case, the world of that detective becomes not more improbable, as it should, defying the laws of probability ever more outrageously, but more and more reliably concretised, and therefore more decipherable.

The detective narrative's equation of the map with the territory can help to explain the centrality of the map in Eco's fiction. As well as the map of the library

⁹ Edmund Crispin, *Beware of the Trains* (London: Penguin, 1987), p.7.

¹⁰ *Beware of the Trains*, p.7.

which William and Adso calculate, which is reproduced in *The Name of the Rose*, there is the map of the abbey on the endpapers of the novel. As Liberato Santoro notes, 'the abbey itself stands as a map of the world', a medieval commonplace.¹¹ There are also various maps and diagrams printed in the text of *Foucault's Pendulum*, from John Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphia* to various maps of the world. These, of course, relate to the Diabolicals' belief that the secret will be revealed if they place the correct map underneath the Foucault Pendulum. This concern may be seen to carry over into *The Island of the Day Before*, with its concentration on the fundamental elements of the map as sea chart, the need to get the lines of longitude correct. It is, however, *Foucault's Pendulum* that most explicitly brings the relation of the map with reality to the forefront. In the chapter headed by Alfred Korzybski's comment that 'a map is not the territory', the Editors decide that a map by Robert Fludd is in fact a coding device. 'This isn't a map, then,' says Casaubon, 'it's a design for a machine to produce variations of maps, until the right map is found!'.¹² We can detect here, as in the neo-avant-gardist implications of the Plan itself, a tension between the ludic possibilities of recombinatory work, particularly as fiction, and the solemn duty to produce an accurate map of reality.¹³

In fact, in labelling the project of the Editors as 'il Piano' (the Plan), Eco makes an interesting decision. He might more obviously have used 'la trama', which term carries the sense of 'plot' in both its conspiratorial and narratological meanings. However, Eco's choice of 'il Piano' emphasises above anything else that the Editors' pet project is a scheme, a design, some form of a map to be laid over Europe -- albeit a self-consciously silly map, cramming on every possible symbol, every indicator of meaning until it is unreadably complex, appealing in some measure to everybody, but useful to nobody.

¹¹ Liberato Santoro, 'The Name of the Game the Rose Plays', in *Italian Storytellers: Essays on Italian Narrative Literature*, edited by Eric Haywood and Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1989), p.255.

¹² 'Questa non è una mappa. È un progetto di macchina per tentare delle variazioni, per produrre mappe alternative, sino a che non si trovi quella giusta!', *Foucault's Pendulum*, p.362; p.459.

¹³ An obvious point of reference here is Borges' short story 'Of Exactitude in Science', which describes an attempt to produce a map that correlates precisely with the territory. See *A Universal History of Infamy*, p.131.

Alongside the psychological phenomenon of *paranoia moriartii*, one of the most significant emerging characteristics of the detective narrative in the twentieth century is the centrality of maps, or of the idea of mapping, as a means of interpreting the world. If we look back to Poe's 'The Man of the Crowd', we can see the desire to map already operating. The narrator of Poe's story decides that he can understand the mysterious man by following him, in other words, by mapping him onto the city and then reading the result. He follows the man round in circles, until he eventually realises that the man is simply seeking out crowds. So, although the man's 'crime' remains secret, by mapping his movement the narrator has penetrated the essence of his behaviour.

Paul Auster's *City of Glass* takes this drive to equate the inner life with a map of the external life to its extreme. The narrator, Quinn, in taking on the job of detective mistakenly foisted upon him, follows his man, mapping his apparently aimless movement around New York city. It is an obvious gesture to 'The Man of the Crowd', but Auster adapts it to indicate another Poe tale, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*. Quinn plans out the daily walks on paper, reproduced for the benefit of the reader, and he discovers that they spell out, day by day, the phrase 'Tower of Babel'. 'Quinn's thoughts momentarily flew off to the concluding pages of *A. Gordon Pym*', Auster writes, 'and to the discovery of the strange hieroglyphs on the inner wall of the chasm'.¹⁴

What these stories worry over, what they are questioning, is the Golden Age detective story's presumption that it can make perfect maps. Furthermore, the belief implicit in this map-making is that the perfect map will lead us from the external to the internal, to the core meaning of things themselves. The operation of this application of *adequatio rei et intellectus* can be illustrated by a limit-case of the Golden Age detective story, Harry Kemelman's 'The Nine-Mile Walk'.¹⁵ The set-up of the story mirrors Eco's novels in its concentration on the difference between possibility and actuality. A professor of literature attempts to demonstrate to his

¹⁴ Auster, *The New York Trilogy*, p.85.

¹⁵ Harry Kemelman, 'The Nine-Mile Walk', in *Best Detective Stories*, edited by Edmund Crispin (London: Faber, 1959), pp.202-11.

friend 'that a chain of inferences could be logical and still not be true'.¹⁶ Starting with the apparently arbitrary sentence 'A nine-mile walk is no joke, especially in the rain', he constructs a set of logically acceptable inferences about the speaker of the sentence. The friends refer to a map of the locality and work out where the hypothetical speaker must have been coming from, why he had to walk, how he knew the distance, why he minded the rain, and so on.

Thus far the story is similar to the main movement of *Foucault's Pendulum*, following as it does the intellectual diversion of some friends enjoying the aimless pleasure of creativity. The professor is perfectly correct to insist that the inferences are valid, but not necessarily true. However, 'The Nine-Mile Walk' is still a detective story, and the dénouement involves the friends realising that every inference was absolutely correct. A previously unsuspected murder is exposed as a result of the friends' idle game-playing. Their perusal of the map and their construction of a fictional plan -- *un piano* -- based on that map turn into reality, through the device of having the allegedly random sentence as something subconsciously overheard. Aside from this device, the classic use of which is in Buchan's *The Three Hostages*, it is because the friends are such good detectives, so precise in constructing an accurate plan of the world, that they are able to solve mysteries of which they were not even aware. This is the supreme moment of map-making, the high tide of the belief in its infallibility as a tool for interpreting the world. This moment is well-named as the Golden Age of detective fiction, not simply because it saw a high point in terms of output, sales and cultural influence for the genre, but because the beliefs embodied in its fiction are those of a mythological world, an Edenic world where the map perfectly corresponds to the territory, where there is no distance between words and things, where there is no Derridean *différance*.

This reminder of the theoretical background from which Eco writes is timely. The discussion of the novels as a form of theory has been deliberately deferred throughout this analysis. I have been concerned throughout to counteract the marked tendency in critical work on Eco's fiction to treat it as either an impoverished or an illustrated form of his semiotic theory. In order to achieve this, it has been necessary

¹⁶ Kemelman, p.211.

to erect artificially solid boundaries between Eco as a theorist and Eco as a novelist, both in regard to their simultaneous presence within Eco himself, and as a duality of which his audience is, to a greater or lesser degree, aware.

It can now be acknowledged that Eco's novels must, to some extent, respond to his reflections on the subject of textual interpretation and the legitimacy of individual interpretations. All three novels concern themselves intimately with the production of interpretations, predominantly through the generically recognisable interpretive processes of the detective narrative. *The Island of the Day Before* shares this generic ground inasmuch as it is a fiction of disclosure, aligning itself with 'adventure' narratives of Poe, Stevenson and Conrad in which, as in the detective narrative, the manufacture and testing of interpretive guesses is of paramount importance.

In all of Eco's fiction, as we have seen, questions of interpretation may be understood primarily through Peirce's theory of abduction. *The Name of the Rose* shows the possibility of a moderate abductive model within the detective narrative. *Foucault's Pendulum* takes on developments within the detective narrative in order to demonstrate the dangerous possibilities of the abductive process. *The Island of the Day Before* illustrates the dangers that may arise from the failure to connect abductive guessing with a process of testing. All three of the novels operate as forms of ludic space in which these issues of interpretability may themselves be tested. We can generalise this to assert that all fictions of disclosure are, in principle at least, narrative forms in which the possibilities and limitations of abductive procedure can be explored within the 'small worlds' of coherent narrative. Therefore, in order to create a space in which abductive guesses can be meaningfully explored, the fictive world must be, on the first level, realistic. The entirety of Eco's fictional play with the very ideas of interpretation, guessing and detection must be carried out against the backdrop of fictional worlds which appear to the reader relatively solid, naturalistic. This explains Eco's insistence on the novel as a cosmological event, as a coherently created world. Some of his instincts lead him to play narrative games at the level of the narration which can seem to undermine the solidity of the narrative 'small world', but there is nevertheless such a consistent sense of reality in the novels that such destabilising procedures are either marginalised (as in *The Name of the Rose* and *Foucault's Pendulum*) or counterproductive (*The Island of the Day Before*).

The fact is that the detective narrative, more than any other genre, already presupposes the kind of double, or critical, reading which such devices might seek to introduce. As we saw in Chapter Two, Eco himself has argued for the detective narrative's special, emblematic status in this respect. In discussing the potential complexities of his formulation of the Model Reader, Eco argues that

many texts aim at producing *two* Model Readers, a first level, or a naive one, supposed to understand semantically what the text says, and a second level, or critical one, supposed to appreciate the way in which the text says so.¹⁷

On the one hand, Eco evidently has in mind here the procedures of many self-consciously literary or artistic texts, which demand a heightened awareness from the reader of the very process of reading the text itself. On the other hand, as he indicates, there is a generic form of text which mimics these artistic requirements without declaring, or expecting, them to be artistic. 'Similarly,' writes Eco,

a mystery tale displays an astute narrative strategy in order to produce a naive Model Reader eager to fall into the traps of the narrator (to feel fear or to suspect the innocent one) but usually wants to produce also a critical Model Reader able to enjoy, at a second reading, the brilliant narrative strategy by which the first-level, naive reader was designed.¹⁸

This doubleness, finally, is what makes the detective narrative useful for Eco. It is a doubleness that allows his own fiction, by both tracing and following the contours of the detective narrative, to simultaneously operate as entertainment and as inquiry. It is typical of Eco that he should require his novels to operate, at the same time as they are performing more marginal and exploratory tasks, consistently as narrative devices of the most familiar and accessible type. This means that they fulfil the primary requirement of difference, in that unlike his prior works, they are not theoretical. They act; their existence is itself a coherent and sufficient performance. Indeed, they can go further than this. Relying on the self-sufficiency

¹⁷ *The Limits of Interpretation*, p.55.

¹⁸ *The Limits of Interpretation*, p.55.

of the detective narrative, its rejection of anything outside the text, they can begin to play with the interaction of the text with its context, the outside world.

One of the most interesting results to emerge from this comparative examination of all three of Eco's novels is that they portray a shifting series of positions within this overall debate on interpretation. While *The Name of the Rose* attempts to construct a moderate position broadly recognisable as the one Eco himself has adopted in recent years, the other two novels are more concerned to explore both the limitations of interpretation and the dangers of excessive interpretive energy. It is in this sense that the second level of reading permitted by the detective narrative comes into play. The entanglement of each of the novels within the discourse and conventions of the detective narrative, even when, as in *The Island of the Day Before*, this is not the main focus, allows the fiction to perform some of the functions of theory.

In the case of Eco's novels, one of the functions performed is a genealogical tracing of the idea of abductive inquiry. Within its narrative *The Name of the Rose* collects allusions to the main tenets and examples of the Golden Age detective narrative, at the same time as it displays the scholastic logic to which the detective narrative may be related. This scholasticism may be found, *inter alia*, in the Jesuit-educated Conan Doyle and in Chesterton's quasi-Thomist Father Brown. *Foucault's Pendulum* traces the development of the detective narrative into the hard-boiled detective story, the spy narrative and conspiracy fiction through the twentieth century. Yet it also makes a strong case for tracing conspiratorial and paranoid logic as a significant element of modern European history, particularly with reference to the development of anti-Semitic thought to its eventual culmination in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and the Holocaust. Finally, *The Island of the Day Before* makes links between the typical activities of detection and the processes of experimental science emerging in Baroque Europe in the mid-seventeenth century. From the perspective of the end of the twentieth century, at a moment when the very idea of systematic inquiry, exemplified by experimental science, has been placed under question, Eco's novels engage in a historical inquiry into the very notion of systematic inquiry. The privileged status of fiction, its self-reliance and its ability to proclaim facts without test or reference to the outside world makes it the perfect mechanism by which to conduct a systematic inquiry into the possibility of such

structured investigation. It is through the exploration of the interaction of the paranoid and the ironic within the detective narrative that Eco's fictions can exemplify and explore the relevance of the genre to questions of interpretation, and, through this, playfully explore the troubled issue of interpretive freedom. The novels adopt the consciously ironic stance of using their ludic freedom to argue against paranoid interpretation in the real world, which they achieve through their conscious adoption of the detective narrative, a genre that expects paranoid interpretation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This thesis was prepared in accordance with the MHRA style book. Due to the complex publishing histories of many of Eco's works, particularly the collections of essays, his English and Italian works are listed separately in the bibliography. The relationship between different versions is indicated, where appropriate, in the main text.

Primary Texts

In English

Eco, Umberto, *Foucault's Pendulum*, translation of *Il pendolo di Foucault* by William Weaver (London: Secker and Warburg, 1989)

Eco, Umberto, *The Island of the Day Before*, translation of *L'isola del giorno prima* by William Weaver (London: Secker and Warburg, 1995)

Eco, Umberto, *The Name of the Rose*, translation of *Il nome della rosa* by William Weaver (London: Secker and Warburg, 1983)

In Italian

Eco, Umberto, *L'isola del giorno prima* (Milan: Bompiani, 1994)

Eco, Umberto, *Il nome della rosa* (Milan: Bompiani, 1980), all references to the corrected twelfth edition (1983)

Eco, Umberto, *Il pendolo di Foucault* (Milan: Bompiani, 1988)

Secondary Texts

Adair, Gilbert, 'Marooned in a sea of stories', *Sunday Times*, 1 Oct 1995, Books, p.12

Allum, P., 'Political Terrorism in Italy', *Journal of the Association of Teachers of Italian* 25 (1978), 5-18

Ambrose, Mary, 'Error and the Abuse of Language in the "Promessi Sposi"', *Modern Language Review* 72:1 (1977), 62-72

Arpino, Giovanni, *L'ombre delle colline* (Milan: Mondadori, 1963)

Artigiani, Robert, 'Image-Music-Pinball', *Modern Language Notes* 107 (1992), 855-876

Artigiani, Robert, 'The "Model Reader" and the Thermodynamic Model', *SubStance* 14:2 (1985), 64-73

Aubrey, John, *Brief Lives. Chieftly of Contemporaries, set down by John Aubrey, between the Years 1669 & 1696*, edited by Andrew Clark (Oxford: Clarendon, 1898)

Auster, Paul, *The New York Trilogy* (London: Penguin, 1990)

Baigent, Michael, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln, *The Holy Blood & the Holy Grail* (London: Cape, 1982)

Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, translated by R.W. Rotsel (Ann Arbor: Ardi, 1973)

Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais and His World*, translated by Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1968)

Balestrini, Nanni, *Ma noi facciamone un'altra* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1968)

Balestrini, Nanni, *Poesie pratiche 1954-1969* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976)

Balestrini, Nanni, *Tristano* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1966)

Balestrini, Nanni, *La violenza illustrata* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976)

Balestrini, Nanni, *Vogliamo tutto* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1971)

Balestrini, Nanni (ed.), *Materiale 7: Gruppo 63; Il romanzo sperimentale, Palermo 1965* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1966)

Balestrini, Nanni, and Alfredo Giuliano (eds.), *Gruppo 63. La nuova letteratura* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1964)

Baranski, Zygmunt G., and Robert Lumley (eds.), *Culture and Conflict in Post-War Italy: Essays on Mass and Popular Culture* (New York: St Martin's, 1990)

Baranski, Zygmunt G., and Lino Pertile (eds.), *The New Italian Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993)

Baricelli, Jean-Pierre, 'Structure and Symbol in Manzoni's *I promessi sposi*', *PMLA* 87:3 (1972), 499-507

Barilli, Renato, *La neoavanguardia italiana: dalla nascita del «Verri» alla fine di «Quindici»* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995)

Barilli, Renato, and Angelo Guglielmi, *Gruppo 63. Critica e teoria* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1976)

Barnett, L.K., 'Notes on Pavese's Critical Views of American Literature', *Forum Italicum* 8 (1974), 381-89

- Barthes, Roland, *Image-Music-Text*, translated by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977)
- Bassnett-McGuire, Susan, *Luigi Pirandello* (London: Macmillan, 1983)
- Baudelaire, Charles, *The Complete Verse*, edited, introduced and translated by Francis Scarfe, 2 vols (London: Anvil, 1986)
- Baxter, David, 'Murder and Mayhem in a Medieval Abbey: The Philosophy of *The Name of the Rose*', *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 3 (1989), 170-189
- Bedini, Silvio A., *The Pulse of Time: Galileo Galilei, the Determination of Longitude, and the Pendulum Clock* (Florence: Biblioteca di Nuncius, 1991)
- Behler, E., *Irony and the Discourse of Modernity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990)
- Benjamin, Walter, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, translation by Harry Zohn (London: Verso, 1983)
- Biasin, Gian-Paolo, *The Smile of the Gods: A Thematic Study of Cesare Pavese's Work* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell, 1968)
- Bondanella, Peter, *Umberto Eco and the Open Text: Semiotics, Fiction, Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
- Bongiorno, Robert, 'Prose Texture as Content in *Quel Pasticciaccio Brutto de Via Merulana*', *Romance Notes* 14 (1972), 49-56
- Booth, Wayne C., *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1974)

- Borges, Jorge Luis, *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings*, edited by Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby (London: Penguin, 1970)
- Borges, Jorge Luis, *Obras Completas 1923-1972* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1974)
- Borges, Jorge Luis, *A Universal History of Infamy*, translated by Norman Thomas di Giovanni (London: Lane, 1973)
- Bouchard, Norma, 'Critifictional Epistemes in Contemporary Literature: The Case of *Foucault's Pendulum*', *Comparative Literature Studies* 32:4 (1995), 50-67
- Bouchard, Norma, 'Umberto Eco's *L'isola del giorno prima*: Postmodern Theory and Fictional Praxis', *Italica* 72:2 (1995), 193-208
- Bouchard, Norma, 'Whose "Excess of Wonder" Is It Anyway?: Reading Umberto Eco's Tangle of Hermetic and Pragmatic Semiosis in *The Island of the Day Before*', in Rocco Capozzi (ed.), *Reading Eco: An Anthology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp.350-61
- Braswell, Laurel, 'Meta-psychomania in Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', *Mosaic* 20 (1987), 1-11
- Buchan, John, *The Complete Richard Hannay* (London: Penguin, 1992)
- Burroughs, William S., *The Burroughs File* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1984)
- Burroughs, William S., and Brion Gysin, *The Third Mind* (London: John Calder, 1979)
- Buzzati, Dino, *Il deserto dei Tartari* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1940), translated by Stuart Hood as *The Tartar Steppe* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1952)

Caesar, Michael, and Peter Hainsworth (eds.), *Writers & Society in Contemporary Italy* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1984)

Calabrese, Omar, *Neo-Baroque: A Sign of the Times*, translated by Charles Lambert (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992)

Calasso, Roberto, *La Rovina di Kasch* (Milan: Adelphi, 1983), translated by William Weaver and Stephen Sartarelli as *The Ruin of Kasch* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1994)

Calvino, Italo, *Il barone rampante* (Turin: Einaudi, 1957), reprinted in the trilogy *I nostri antenati* (1960)

Calvino, Italo, *Il castello dei destini incrociati* (Turin: Einaudi, 1973), translated by William Weaver as *The Castle of Crossed Destinies* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976)

Calvino, Italo, *Il cavaliere inesistente* (Turin: Einaudi, 1959), reprinted in the trilogy *I nostri antenati* (1960)

Calvino, Italo, *Collezione di sabbia* (Milan: Garzanti, 1984)

Calvino, Italo, *Le Cosmicomiche* (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), translated by William Weaver as *Cosmicomics* (New York: Harcourt, 1968)

Calvino, Italo, 'Main Currents in Italian Fiction Today', *Italian Quarterly* 4:13-14 (1950), 3-14

Calvino, Italo, *I nostri antenati* (Turin: Einaudi, 1960), translated by Archibald Colquhoun as *Our Ancestors* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1980)

Calvino, Italo, *Palomar* (Turin: Einaudi, 1983), translated by William Weaver as *Mr Palomar* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1985)

Calvino, Italo, *Una pietra sopra: Discorsi di letteratura e società* (Turin: Einaudi, 1980), substantially translated by Patrick Creagh as *The Literature Machine* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1987)

Calvino, Italo, *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno* (Turin: Einaudi, 1947), translated by Archibald Colquhoun, revised by Martin McLaughlin as *The Path to the Spiders' Nests* (London: Cape, 1998)

Calvino, Italo, *Ti con zero* (Turin: Einaudi, 1967), translated by William Weaver as *Time and the Hunter* (in the USA as *T zero*) (London: Cape, 1970)

Calvino, Italo, *Ultimo viene il corvo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1949)

Calvino, Italo, *Il visconte dimezzato* (Turin: Einaudi, 1952), republished in the trilogy *I nostri antenati* (1960)

Cannon, JoAnn, 'The Detective Fiction of Leonardo Sciascia', *Modern Fiction Studies* 29 (1983), 523-34

Cannon, JoAnn, 'The Imaginary Universe of Umberto Eco: A Reading of *Foucault's Pendulum*', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 38 (1992), 895-909

Cannon, JoAnn, *Italo Calvino, writer and critic*, *L'interprete* 27 (Ravenna: Longo, 1981)

Cannon, JoAnn, *Postmodern Italian Fiction: The Crisis of Reason in Calvino, Eco, Sciascia, Malerba* (London: Associated University Presses, 1989)

Cannon, JoAnn, 'Semiotics and Conjecture in *Il nome della rosa*', *Italian Quarterly* 27 (1986), 39-47

Capozzi, Rocco, 'Intertextuality, Metaphors, and Metafiction as Cognitive Strategies in *The Island of the Day Before*', in Rocco Capozzi (ed.), *Reading Eco: An Anthology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp.387-403

Capozzi, Rocco, 'Palimpsests and Laughter: The Dialogical Pleasure of Unlimited Intertextuality in *The Name of the Rose*', *Italica*, 66:4 (1989), 412-428

Capozzi, Rocco, 'Il pendolo di Foucault: Kitsch o neo/post-moderno', *Quaderni d'Italianistica* 2 (1990), 225-37

Capozzi, Rocco, 'Scriptor e Lector in fabula ne *Il nome della rosa*', *Quaderni d'Italianistica* 3:2 (1982), 219-229

Capozzi, Rocco, (ed.), *Reading Eco: An Anthology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997)

Carpino, Joseph J., 'On Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy* 14 (1986), 389-413

Cassola, Carlo, *La ragazza di Bube* (Turin: Einaudi, 1960), translated by Marguerite Waldman as *Bebo's Girl* (London: Collins, 1962)

Castronovo, Valerio (ed.), *L'Italia contemporanea 1945-1975* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975)

Catania, Thomas M., 'What Is the Mystery of *The Name of the Rose*?', *New Catholic World* 228 (1985), 157-161

Cervantes, *Exemplary Stories*, translated by C.A. Jones (London: Penguin, 1972)

Chandler, Raymond, *Farewell, My Lovely* (London: Penguin, 1949)

Chandler, Raymond, *Pearls are a Nuisance* (London: Penguin, 1964)

- Chase, Richard H., 'Cesare Pavese and the American Novel', *Studi americani* 3 (1957), 347-69
- Chesterton, G.K., *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1908)
- Chesterton, G.K., *The Penguin Complete Father Brown* (London: Penguin, 1981)
- Childers, Erskine, *The Riddle of the Sands* (London: Smith, Elder, 1903)
- Christie, Agatha, *The ABC Murders* (London: HarperCollins, 1996)
- Churchill, John, 'Wittgenstein's Ladder', *American Notes and Queries* 23 (Sept-Oct 1984), 21-2
- Clerici, Carlotta, 'Sulle tracce del giallo nel *Il nome della rosa*', *Italies narrativa* 10 (1996), 101-18
- Cohen, Michael, 'The Hounding of Baskerville: Allusion and Apocalypse in Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', in *Naming the Rose: Essays on Eco's 'The Name of the Rose'* edited by M. Thomas Inge (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1988), pp.65-76
- Cohn, Norman, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967)
- Coletti, Theresa, 'Eco's Pendulum', *Guardian*, 7 October 1989, Supplement, pp.19-22, 27
- Coletti, Theresa, *Naming the Rose: Eco, Medieval Signs, and Modern Theory* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988)

- Coletti, Theresa, 'Pinball, Voodoo, and "Good Primal Matter": Incarnations of Silence in *Foucault's Pendulum*', *Modern Language Notes* 107 (1992), 877-891
- Colquhoun, Archibald, *Manzoni and his Times* (London: Dent, 1954)
- Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Leopard, 1996)
- Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur, *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Leopard, 1996)
- Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (London: Leopard, 1996)
- Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur, *The Land of Mist* (London: Hutchinson, 1926)
- Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur, *The Lost World* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912)
- Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur, *The Maracot Deep and Other Stories* (London: Murray, 1929)
- Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur, *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Leopard, 1996)
- Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur, *Memories and Adventures* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1924)
- Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur, *The Poison Belt* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913)
- Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Leopard, 1996)
- Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur, *The Sign of Four* (London: Leopard, 1996)
- Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur, *A Study in Scarlet* (London: Leopard, 1996)

Conrad, Joseph, *Lord Jim: A Tale*, edited by John Batchelor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983)

Conrad, Joseph, 'The Secret Sharer', in *Twixt Land and Sea: Tales* (London: Dent, 1912)

Controneo, Roberto, *La diffidenza come sistema: Saggi sulla narrativa di Umberto Eco* (Milan: Anabasi, 1995)

Corry, Leo, 'Jorge Borges, Author of *The Name of the Rose*', *Poetics Today* 13 (1992), 425-445

Corti, Maria, *An Introduction to Literary Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana, 1978)

Crispin, Edmund, *Beware of the Trains* (London: Penguin, 1987)

Crispin, Edmund (ed.), *Best Detective Stories* (London: Faber, 1959)

Crosland, Maurice (ed.), *The Emergence of Science in Western Europe* (London: Macmillan, 1975)

Cross, Andrew, 'Neither either nor or: The perils of reflexive irony', in *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, edited by Alastair Hannay and Gordon D. Marino (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

D'Agostino, Nemi, 'Pavese e l'America', *Studi americani* 2 (1956), 399-413

Daraul, Arkon, *A History of Secret Societies* (New York: Citadel, 1994)

Daviti, Lorenzi, *Pavese e la cultura americana* (Florence: D'Anna, 1975)

De Bertodano, Helena, 'The man who knows too much', *Sunday Telegraph*, 8 Oct 1995, p.15

Defoe, Daniel, *The Life and Strange and Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* edited with an introduction and notes by J. Donald Crowley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972)

Degli-Esposti, Christina, 'The Poetics of Hermeticism in Umberto Eco's *Il pendolo di Foucault*', *Forum Italicum* 25:2 (1991), 185-204

De Lailhacar, Christine, 'The Mirror and the Encyclopedia: Borgesian codes in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', in *Borges and His Successors: The Borgesian Impact on Literature and the Arts*, edited by Edna Aizenberg (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990), pp.155-179

De Lauretis, Teresa, 'Gaudy Rose: Eco and Narcicissm', *SubStance* 14:2 (1985), 13-29

De Lauretis, Teresa, 'Narrative Discourse in Calvino: Praxis or Poesis?', *PMLA* 90:3 (1975), 414-25

De Lauretis, Teresa, *Umberto Eco* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1981)

del Buono, Oreste, and Umberto Eco (eds.), *The Bond Affair*, translation of *Il caso Bond* by R.A. Downie (London: MacDonald, 1966)

del Buono, Oreste, and Umberto Eco (eds.), *Il caso Bond* (Milan: Bompiani, 1965)

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari, *Rhizome* (Paris: Minuit, 1976)

DeLillo, Don, *Libra* (London: Penguin, 1988)

DeLillo, Don, *Underworld* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997)

Della Terza, Dante, 'Italian Fiction from Pavese to Pasolini', *Italian Quarterly* 3 (1959), 29-41

Della Terza, Dante, 'The Neorealists and the Form of the Novel', *Italian Quarterly* 10 (1966), 3-20

Deuser, Hermann, 'Christianity -- Sign Among Signs?', translated by Dennis Beach, *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 7 (1993), 286-297

Dibdin, Michael, *The Last Sherlock Holmes Story* (London: Cape, 1978)

Dibdin, Michael, *Ratking* (London: Faber, 1988)

Dibdin, Michael (ed.), *The Picador Book of Crime Writing* (London: Picador, 1994)

Digby, Sir Kenelm, *Discours fair en une Celebre Assemblée, par le Chevalier Digby...Touchant la Guerison des Playes par la Poudre de Sympathie* (Paris: Augustin Courbé and Pierre Moet, 1658), translated by R. White as *A late Discourse Made in Solemne Assembly...touching the Cure of Wounds by the Powder of Sympathy* (London, 1658)

Digby, Sir Kenelm, *Private Memoirs of Sir Kenelm Digby, Gentleman of the Bedchamber to King Charles the First. Written by Himself* (London: Saunders & Otley, 1827)

Digby, Sir Kenelm, *Two Treatises, in the One of which, the Nature of Bodies; in the Other, the Nature of Mans Soule, is looked into: in way of discovery, of the Immortality of Reasonable Soules* (Paris: Gilles Blaizot, 1644)

Dobbs, Betty Jo Teeter, *The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy, or "The Hunting of the Greene Lyon"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975)

Dombroski, Robert S., 'Manzoni on the Italian Left', *Annali d'Italianistica* 3 (1985), 97-110

Dombroski, Robert S., 'The Ideological Question in Manzoni', *Studies in Romanticism* 20:4 (1981), 497-524

Dombroski, Robert S., *Properties of Writing: Ideological Discourse in Modern Italian Fiction* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1994)

Domecq, Honorio Bustos [Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares], *Six Problems for Don Isidro Parodi*, translated by Norman Thomas di Giovanni (London: Allen Lane, 1981)

Donne, John, *Selected Prose*, edited with an introduction and notes by Neil Rhodes (London: Penguin, 1987)

Dumas, Alexandre, *La Reine Margot, ou, Marguerite de Valois*, in *Oeuvres Illustrées*, 11 vols (Paris: Dufour et Mulat, 1852-7), IV, translated as *Queen Margot* (New York: Hyperion, 1994)

Eckart, C., and F.C. Hoyt, *The Physical Principles of Quantum Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930)

Eco, Umberto, 'Die Abduktion in Uqbar', in Honorio Bustos Domecq [Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares], *Sechs Aufgaben für Don Isidro Parodi* (Munich: Hanser, 1983)

Eco, Umberto, *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos: The Middle Ages of James Joyce*, translation of *Le Poetiche di Joyce* by Ellen Esrock (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Univesity of Tulsa Press, 1982), republished with introductory Note by David Robey (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1989)

Eco, Umberto, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, translation of *Il problema estetico in Tommaso d'Aquino* by Hugh Bredin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988)

- Eco, Umberto, 'After Secret Knowledge', *Times Literary Supplement*, 22 January 1990, pp.666, 678
- Eco, Umberto, *Apocalittici e integrati: comunicazione di massa e teorie della cultura di massa* (Milan: Bompiani, 1964)
- Eco, Umberto, *Apocalypse Postponed*, partial translation of *Apocalittici e integrati*, edited with an introduction by Robert Lumley (London: Flamingo, 1995)
- Eco, Umberto, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, partial translation of *Arte e bellezza nell'estetica medievale* by Hugh Bredin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986)
- Eco, Umberto, *Arte e bellezza nell'estetica medievale* (Milan: Bompiani, 1987)
- Eco, Umberto, 'Conjecturer: D'Aristote à Sherlock Holmes' [French translation of 'Horns, Hooves, Insteps'], *Magazine Littéraire* 241 (April 1987), 32-41
- Eco, Umberto, 'The Death of the Gruppo 63', *Twentieth Century Studies* 5 (Sept 1971), 60-71
- Eco, Umberto, *Diario minimo* (Milan: Mondadori, 1963)
- Eco, Umberto, 'L'Epistola XIII e l'allegorismo medievale', in *Sugli specchi e altri saggi*, second edition (Milan: Bompiani, 1987), pp.215-41
- Eco, Umberto, ['Dedalus'], *Filosofi in libertà* (Turin: Taylor, 1958)
- Eco, Umberto, 'Foreword' to Omar Calabrese, *Neo-Baroque: A Sign of the Times*, translated by Charles Lambert (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992)
- Eco, Umberto, 'Formes et Communication', *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 21 (1967), 231-251

Eco, Umberto, 'Horns, Hooves, Insteps: Some Hypotheses on Three Types of Abduction', in *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce*, edited by Umberto Eco and Thomas A. Sebeok (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp.198-220

Eco, Umberto, *How to Travel with a Salmon and Other Essays*, partial translation of *Il secondo diario minimo* by William Weaver (London: Secker & Warburg, 1994)

Eco, Umberto, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, with Richard Rorty, Jonathan Culler and Christine Brooke-Rose, edited by Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)

Eco, Umberto, Introduction to Maria Pia Pozzato (ed.), *L'idea deforme: Interpretazione ermetiche di Dante* (Milan: Bompiani, 1992)

Eco, Umberto, *Lector in fabula: la cooperazione interpretiva nei testi narrativi* (Milan: Bompiani, 1979)

Eco, Umberto, *The Limits of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990)

Eco, Umberto, *Looking for a logic of culture* (Lisse: de Ridder Press, 1975)

Eco, Umberto, 'Meaning and Denotation', *Synthese* 73 (1987), 549-568

Eco, Umberto, *Misreadings*, partial translation of *Diario minimo* by William Weaver (London: Cape, 1993)

Eco, Umberto, *The Open Work*, revised version of *Opera aperta*, translated by Anna Cancogni (Cambridge, Mass.: Hutchinson Radius, 1989)

Eco, Umberto, *Opera aperta: forma e indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee* (Milan: Mondadori, 1962)

Eco, Umberto, 'Peirce's Analysis of Meaning', in *Graduate Studies Texas Tech University*, edited by Kenneth L. Ketner (Lubbock: Texas Tech Press, 1981), pp.179-193

Eco, Umberto, *Le Poetiche di Joyce: dalla "Summa" al "Finnegans Wake"* (Milan: Bompiani, 1965)

Eco, Umberto, *Postille al "Nome della rosa"* (Milan: Bompiani, 1983)

Eco, Umberto, *Il problema estetico in San Tommaso* (Turin: Edizione di filosofia, 1956)

Eco, Umberto, *Il problema estetico in Tommmaso d'Aquino* (Milan: Bompiani, 1970)

Eco, Umberto, 'Reading my Readers', *Modern Language Notes* 107 (1992), 819-827

Eco, Umberto, *Reflections on 'The Name of the Rose'*, translation of *Postille al "Nome della rosa"* by William Weaver (London: Secker and Warburg, 1985)

Eco, Umberto, *Ricerca della lingua perfetta nella cultura europea* (Rome: Laterza, 1993),

Eco, Umberto, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979)

Eco, Umberto, *The Search for the Perfect Language*, translation of *Ricerca della lingua perfetta nella cultura europea* by James Fentress (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995)

Eco, Umberto, *Il secondo diario minimo* (Milan: Bompiani, 1992)

Eco, Umberto, 'Semiosi naturale e parola nei *Promessi sposi*', in *Leggere I promessi sposi*, edited by Giovanni Manetti (Milan: Bompiani, 1989), pp.1-16

Eco, Umberto, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986)

Eco, Umberto, *Sette anni di desiderio* (Milan: Bompiani, 1981)

Eco, Umberto, *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods: The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures, 1993* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1994)

Eco, Umberto, 'Some Paranoid Readings', *Times Literary Supplement*, 29 January 1990, pp.694, 706

Eco, Umberto, *La struttura assente: La ricerca semiotica e il metodo strutturale* (Milan: Bompiani, 1968)

Eco, Umberto, 'Le strutture narrative in Fleming', in *Il caso Bond*, edited by Oreste del Buono and Umberto Eco (Milan: Bompiani, 1965)

Eco, Umberto, *Sugli specchi e altri saggi* (Milan: Bompiani, 1985)

Eco, Umberto, 'Sviluppo dell'esterica medievale', in *Momenti e problemi di storia dell'estetica*, I (Milan: Marzorati, 1959)

Eco, Umberto, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976)

Eco, Umberto, *Trattato di semiotica generale* (Milan: Bompiani, 1975)

Eco, Umberto, *Travels in Hyperreality* [also published as *Faith in Fakes*], translated by William Weaver (London: Secker & Warburg, 1986)

Eco, Umberto, and Constantino Marmo (eds.), *On the Medieval Theory of Signs* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1989)

- Eco, Umberto, Marco Santambrogio and Patrizia Violi (eds.), *Meaning and Mental Representations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988)
- Eco, Umberto, and Thomas A. Sebeok (eds.), *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983)
- Ekblad, Sven, *Studi sui sottofondi strutturali nel «Nome della rosa» di Umberto Eco. Parte I. «La divina commedia» di Dante*, Etudes romanes de Lund 51 (Lund: Lund University Press, 1994)
- Eliot, George, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*, edited by Rosemary Ashton (London: Penguin, 1994)
- Eliot, T.S., *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (London: Faber, 1939)
- Eliot, T.S., *The Waste Land* (London: Hogarth, 1923)
- Eriksson, Gunnar, *The Atlantic Vision: Olaus Rudbeck and Baroque Science* (Canton, Mass.: Science History, 1994)
- Esposito, R., *Le ideologie della neo-avanguardia* (Naples: Liguori, 1976)
- Evans, Christine Ann, 'Between Postmodernism and Cultural Critique: Umberto Eco and the Popular', *Romance Languages Annual* 1 (1989), 111-115
- Fairbank Jr., Benjamin A., 'William of Baskerville and Sherlock Holmes: A Study in Identity', *The Baker Street Journal: An Irregular Quarterly of Sherlockania* 40 (1990), 83-90
- Falaschi, Giovanni, 'Italo Calvino', *Belfagor* 27:5 (1972), 530-58
- Falaschi, Giovanni, *La resistenza armata nella narrativa italiana*, Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi 262 (Turin: Einaudi, 1976)

Fann, K.T., *Peirce's Theory of Abduction* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970)

Fanthorpe, Lionel and Patricia, *Rennes-le-Château* (Ashford: Bellevue, 1991)

Federici, Corrado, 'Epistemology in Eco's *Il nome della rosa*', *Quaderni d'Italianistica* 7 (1986), 183-196

Fenoglio, Beppe, *Una questione privata* (Milan: Garzanti, 1965)

Fernandez, Dominique, *Le roman italien et la crise de la conscience moderne* (Paris: Grasset, 1958)

Feyerabend, Paul K., *Problems of Empiricism*, Philosophical Papers Volume 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981)

Feyerabend, Paul K., *Realism, Rationalism and Scientific Method*, Philosophical Papers Volume 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981)

Fleck, L., *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1935)

Fleissner, Robert, 'The Master Sleuth Accomodated', *Sherlock Holmes Review* (Bloomington), 2 [n.d.], 15-20, 42

Flieger, Verlyn, 'The Name, the Thing, the Mystery', *The Georgia Review* 38 (1984), 178-181

Foucault, Michel, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Pantheon, 1970)

Fowles, John, *The Magus* (London: Cape, 1966)

Fraser, J., *Italy: Society in Crisis/Society in Transformation* (London: RKP, 1981)

- Freccero, John, 'Mythos and Logos: *The Moon and the Bonfires*', *Italian Quarterly* 4:16 (1961), 3-16
- Frentz, Thomas S., 'Resurrecting the Feminine in *The Name of the Rose*', *Pre/Text* 9 (1988), 123-145
- Freud, Sigmund, *Art and Literature*, edited by Albert Dicksen (London: Penguin, 1985)
- Furst, Lilian R., *Fictions of Romantic Irony in European Narrative, 1760-1857* (London: Macmillan, 1984)
- Gadda, Carlo Emilio, *La cognizione del dolore* (Turin: Einaudi, 1963)
- Gadda, Carlo Emilio, *Quel pasticciaccio brutto de Via Merulana* (Milan: Garzanti, 1957), translated by William Weaver as *That Awful Mess on Merulana* (New York: Braziler, 1965)
- Garber, F. (ed.), *Romantic Irony* (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1988)
- Gargani, Aldo (ed.), *Crisi della ragione* (Turin: Einaudi, 1979)
- Garrett, Jeffrey, 'Missing Eco: On Reading *The Name of the Rose* as Library Criticism', *Library Quarterly* 61 (1991), 373-388
- Gatt-Rutter, John, *Writers and Politics in Modern Italy* (London: Hodder, 1978)
- Gilbert, G.N., and M. Mulkay, 'Warranting Scientific Beliefs', *Social Studies of Science* 12 (1982), 383-408
- Ginsburg, Paul, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics 1943-1988* (London: Penguin, 1990)

- Ginzburg, Carlo, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, translated by John and Anne Tedeschi (London: Penguin, 1982)
- Ginzburg, Carlo, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, translated by Raymond Rosenthal, edited by Gregory Elliott (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1990)
- Ginzburg, Carlo, 'Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method', in Umberto Eco and Thomas A. Sebeok (eds.), *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983)
- Ginzburg, Carlo, *Myths, Emblems, Clues*, translated by John and Anne C. Tedeschi (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1986)
- Ginzburg, Carlo, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth Century*, translated by John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1983)
- Glassman, Nina, 'An Interview with Umberto Eco', *Italian Quarterly* 29 (1988), 69-78
- Goh, Robbie B.H., 'In Pursuit of the Thing: Umberto Eco's Semiotics, Narrative and the Detective Story in *The Name of the Rose*', *AUMLA: Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association* 73 (1990), 24-38
- Golden, Leon, 'Eco's Reconstruction of Aristotle's Theory of Comedy in *The Name of the Rose*', *Classical and Modern Literature* 6 (1986), 239-249
- Gramsci, Antonio, *Gli intellettuali e l'organizzazione della cultura* (Turin: Einaudi, 1949)
- Gramsci, Antonio, *Letteratura e vita nazionale* (Turin: Einaudi, 1950)
- Gramsci, Antonio, *Letters from Prison: Lettere dal Carcere*, translated by H. Henderson (London: Pluto, 1988)

- Gramsci, Antonio, *Quaderni del carcere: Edizione critica dell'Istituto Gramsci*, edited by Valentino Gerratana, 4 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1975)
- Greenberg, Clement, *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon, 1961)
- Greene, Graham, *Our Man in Havana* (London: Penguin, 1971)
- Greene, Graham, *Ways of Escape* (London: Penguin, 1980)
- Gussow, Mel, 'A Word-Bending Wit's Riff on the Unreachable', *New York Times*, 28 Nov 1995, B1
- Haft, Adel J., Jane G. White and Robert J. White, *The Key to 'The Name of the Rose'* (Huntington Park, New Jersey: Ampersand Associates, 1987)
- Hall, A. Rupert, *From Galileo to Newton* (New York: Dover, 1981)
- Hammett, Dashiell, *The Maltese Falcon* (New York: Vintage, 1992)
- Hammett, Dashiell, *The Thin Man* (London: Penguin, 1935)
- Hancock, Graham, *Fingerprints of the Gods: A Quest for the Beginning and the End* (London: Heinemann, 1995)
- Hancock, Graham, *The Sign and the Seal: A Quest for the Lost Ark of the Covenant* (London: Heinemann, 1992)
- Harré, Rom, 'Some Narrative Conventions of Scientific Discourse', in *Narrative in Culture: The Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy, and Literature*, edited by Cristopher Nash (London: Routledge, 1990), pp.81-101

Hart, Martin, *Rats* (Chicago: Alison & Busby, 1982)

Hartley, Anthony, 'Eco's Great Mystery: Secrets of an Old Library', *Encounter* 62 (1984), 37-40

Hartley, Anthony, 'On Eco's New Novel: How Collages Kill', *Encounter* 74 (1990), 75-77

Hassan, Ihab, *The Postmodern Turn: Essays in Postmodern Theory and Culture* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1986)

Haycraft, Howard, *Murder for Pleasure: The Life and Times of the Detective Story* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1941)

Haycraft, Howard (ed.), *The Art of the Mystery Story: A Collection of Critical Essays* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946)

Haywood, Eric, and Cormac Ó Cuilleaináin (eds.), *Italian Storytellers: Essays on Italian Narrative Literature*

Heath, A. (ed.), *Scientific Explanation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981)

Heiney, Donald, 'Calvino and Borges: some implications of fantasy', *Mundus Artium* 2 (1968), 66-76

Heiney, Donald, *Three Italian Novelists: Moravia, Pavese, Vittorini* (Ann Arbor: Michigan, 1968)

Higgins, David, 'Eco's *Il nome della rosa* and the Historical Novel', *Association of Teachers of Italian Journal* 52 (1988), 17-26

Hirsch Jr., E.D., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale, 1967)

Hoffmann, E.T.A., *Tales of Hoffmann*, selected and translated with an introduction by R.J. Hollingdale, with the assistance of Stella and Vernon Humphries, and Sally Hayward (London: Penguin, 1982)

Holquist, Michael, 'Whodunit and Other Questions: Metaphysical Detective Stories in Post-War Fiction', *New Literary History* 3:1 (1971), 135-56

Hooper, John, interview with Umberto Eco, 'I went out to buy flowers and returned with dog's testicles', *Guardian*, 30 Sept 1995, Section 2, p.27

Horn, Pierre L., 'The Detective Novel and the Defense of Humanism', in M. Thomas Inge (ed.), *Naming the Rose: Essays on Eco's 'The Name of the Rose'* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1988), pp.90-100

Houghton, Walter E., 'The English Virtuoso in the Seventeenth Century', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 1 and 2 (1942), 51-73 and 190-213

Howard, Michael, *The Occult Conspiracy* (London: Rider, 1989)

Hüllen, Werner, 'Semiotics Narrated: Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', *Semiotica* 64 (1987), 41-57

Hume, Kathryn, *Calvino's Fictions: Cogito and Cosmos* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992)

Hutcheon, Linda, *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (London: Routledge, 1994)

Hutcheon, Linda, 'Pavese's Intellectual Rhythm', *Italian Quarterly* 15:60-61 (1972), 5-26

Hutcheon, Linda, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (London: Methuen, 1985)

Hyman, Arthur, and James J. Walsh (eds.), *Philosophy in the Middle Ages: The Christian, Islamic and Jewish Traditions*, second edition (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1973)

Iles, Francis, *Malice Aforethought: the Story of a Commonplace Crime* (London: Gollancz, 1931)

Inge, M. Thomas (ed.), *Naming the Rose: Essays on Eco's 'The Name of the Rose'* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1988)

Irwin, John T., 'A Clew to a Clue: Locked Rooms and Labyrinths in Poe and Borges', *Raritan* 10:4 (1991), 40-57

Iser, Wolfgang, *The Implied Reader* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1974)

Jencks, Charles, *Postmodernism* (London: Academy Editions, 1987)

Jewison, D. B., 'The Architecture of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', *Perspectives on Contemporary Literature* 13 (1987), 83-90

Juarrero, Alicia, 'The Message Whose Message It is That There is No Message', *Modern Language Notes* 107 (1992), 892-904

Kierkegaard, Søren, *The Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates* (together with *Notes of Schelling's Berlin Lectures*), edited and translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989)

Killy, Walter, *Deutscher Kitsch* (Göttingen: Vandenhocht & Riprecht, 1962)

Kirkpatrick, Ken, 'The Conspiracy of the Miscellaneous in *Foucault's Pendulum*', *Studies in Twentieth Century Literature* 19:2 (Summer 1995), 171-84

- Knox, D., *Ironia: Medieval and Renaissance Ideas on Irony* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989)
- Knox, N., *The Word "Irony" and its Context, 1500-1755* (Durham, N.C.: Duke, 1961)
- Kogan, Norman, *A Political History of Postwar Italy: From the Old to the New Center-Left* (New York: Praeger, 1981)
- Kolskey, Stephen, 'Theoretical Spaces: Journeys Into Knowledge in *The Name of the Rose*', *Romance Studies* 21 (1992-1993), 71-80
- Kreuz, Roger J., and Sam Glucksberg, 'How to be Sarcastic: The Echoic Reminder Theory of Verbal Irony', *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 118 (Dec 1989), 374-86
- Kuhn, Thomas S., *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, second (enlarged) edition, *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, Volume 2 Number 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970)
- La Capria, Raffaele, *Ferito a morte* (Milan: Bompiani, 1960)
- Lecercle, Jean-Jacques, *Philosophy through the Looking Glass: Language, Nonsense, Desire* (London: Hutchinson, 1985)
- Lehen, Richard, *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1998)
- Levi, Primo, *Se non ora, quando?* (Turin: Einaudi, 1982), translated by William Weaver as *If Not Now, When?* (London: Michael Joseph, 1986)
- Levi, Primo, *Se questo è un uomo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1958), translated by Stuart Woolf as *If This is a Man* (London: Orion, 1963)

- Levi, Primo, *Il sistema periodico* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), translated by Raymond Rosenthal as *The Periodic Table* (London: Michael Joseph, 1985)
- Levi, Primo, *La tregua* (Turin: Einaudi, 1963), translated by Stuart Woolf as *The Truce* (London: Bodley Head, 1965)
- Lucente, Gregory L., *Beautiful Fables: Self-consciousness in Italian Narrative from Manzoni to Calvino* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1986)
- Luhr, William, *Raymond Chandler and Film*, second edition (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1991)
- Luria, Keith, 'The Paradoxical Carlo Ginzburg', *Radical History Review* 35 (1986), 80-7
- Mackey, Louis, 'The Name of the Book', *SubStance* 14:2 (1985), 30-39
- Malcolm, Noel, 'When a philosopher loses the plot...', *Sunday Telegraph*, 1 Oct 1995, Books, p.15
- Malerba, Luigi, *Il pianeta azzuro* (Milan: Bompiani, 1986)
- Malerba, Luigi, *Salto mortale* (Milan: Bompiani, 1968), translated by William Weaver as *What Is This Buzzing, Do You Hear It Too?* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1969)
- Malerba, Luigi, *Il serpente* (Milan: Bompiani, 1966), translated by William Weaver as *The Serpent* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968)
- Mammarella, Giuseppe, *L'Italia dalla caduta del fascismo a oggi*, second edition (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1978), first edition translated as *Italy after Fascism: A Political History 1943-1963* (Montreal: Casalini, 1964)

- Manzoni, Alessandro, *I promessi sposi* (Milan: 1827), translated by Bruce Penman as *The Betrothed* (London: Penguin, 1972)
- Markey, Constance, 'Italo Calvino: The Contemporary Fabulist', *Italian Quarterly* 23:88 (1982), 77-85
- Marshall, Lee, 'I started by lying on a Fijian beach', *The European*, 7 October 1994, *Élan*, p.12
- Mauri, Paulo, *Luigi Malerba* (Florence: La nuova Italia (Il Castoro), 1977)
- McGrady, Donald, 'Eco's Bestiary: The Basilisk and the Weasel', *The Italianist* 12 (1992), 75-82
- McGrady, Donald, 'Fra Massimo da Bologna and His *Speculum amoris* in *Il nome della rosa*', *Quaderni d'italianistica* 13:2 (1992), 265-72
- McGrady, Donald, 'An Interview with Eco, Together with Considerations Upon the Validity of Some Modern Authors' Observations on Their Works', *Italian Culture* 8 (1990), 147-161
- McHale, Brian, *Constructing Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1992)
- McHale, Brian, *Postmodernist Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1989)
- McLaughlin, Martin, *Italo Calvino* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1998)
- Meakin, David, *Hermetic Fictions: Alchemy and Irony in the Modern Novel* (Keele: Keele University Press, 1995)
- Mellor, Anne K., *English Romantic Irony* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1980)

Merkel, Ingrid, and Allen G. Debus (eds.), *Hermeticism and the Renaissance: Intellectual History and the Occult in Early Modern Europe* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1988)

Merry, Bruce, 'Artifice and Structure in *La Luna e i Faldò*', *Forum Italicum* 5:3 (1971), 351-58

Messac, Régis, *La "Detective Novel" et l'influence de la pensée scientifique* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1929)

Meyer, Nicholas, *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution: Being a Reprint from the Reminiscences of John H. Watson, M.D.* (New York: Ballantine, 1975)

Mignone, Mario B., *Italy Today: A Country in Transition* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995)

More, Louis Trenchard, 'Boyle as Alchemist', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 2 (1941), 61-76

Muecke, D.C., *Irony and the Ironic* (London: Methuen, 1970)

Muller, John P., and William J. Richardson (eds.), *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida and Psychoanalytic Reading* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1988)

Musto, David F., 'Sherlock Holmes and Heredity', *Journal of the American Medical Association* 196:1, 45

Musto, David F., 'A Study in Cocaine', *Journal of the American Medical Association* 204:1, 27

Nabokov, Vladimir, *The Eye* translated by the author and Dmitri Nabokov (London: Penguin, 1992)

Nabokov, Vladimir, *Lolita* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1959)

Nabokov, Vladimir, *Pale Fire* with an introductory essay by Mary McCarthy (London: Penguin, 1991)

Nagel, Ernest, and James R. Newman, *Gödel's Proof* (London: Routledge, 1958)

Nash, Cristopher, *World Postmodern Fiction: A Guide* (Harlow: Longman, 1993), originally published as *World Games: The Tradition of anti-realist revolt* (London: Methuen, 1987)

Nash, Tom, 'The Name of the Rose: Murder and Meaning', *CEA Critic* 55 (1993), 88-96

Nelson, Victoria, 'The Hermeticon of Umbertus E.', *Raritan: A Quarterly Review* 13 (1993), 87-101

Neppi, Enzo, 'Love and Difference in *The Name of the Rose*', *Hebrew University Studies in Literature and the Arts* (1989), 52-82

Neuhaus, Heinrich, *Pia et ultissima admonestatio de Fratribus Rosae-Crucis, nimirum: an sint? quales sint? unde nomen illud sibi ascriverunt* (Danzig: Schmidlin, 1618)

Norfolk, Lawrence, *Lemprière's Dictionary* (London: Minerva, 1992)

Norris, David, 'C'est plus la même rose', in *Italian Storytellers: Essays on Italian Narrative Literature*, edited by Eric Haywood and Cormac O'Cuilleanaín (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1989), pp.243-253

Norton, Peter, 'Cesare Pavese and the American Nightmare', *Modern Language Notes* 77 (1962), 24-36

O'Mahony, Brendan, '*The Name of the Rose: "Tractatus contra Zelotes"*', in *Italian Storytellers: Essays on Italian Narrative Literature*, edited by Eric Haywood and Cormac O'Cuilleanáin (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1989), pp.229-242

Pacifici, Sergio, *A Guide to Contemporary Italian Literature: from Futurism to Neorealism*, preface by Thomas C. Bergin (Cleveland and New York: Meridian, 1962)

Pacifici, Sergio, *The Modern Italian Novel*, preface by Harry T. Moore, 3 vols. (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967)

Pacifici, Sergio (ed.), *From Verismo to Experimentalism: Essays in the Modern Italian Novel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969)

Parker, Deborah, 'The Literature of Appropriation: Eco's use of Borges in *Il nome della rosa*', *Modern Language Review* 85 (1990), 842-49

Parker, Deborah, 'Narration as Practice in *Il nome della rosa*', *Quaderni d'Italianistica* 11 (1990), 215-224

Parker, Douglass, 'The Curious Case of the Pharaoh's Polyp, and Related Matters', *SubStance* 14:2 (1985), 74-85

Parker, Mark, '*The Name of the Rose* as a Postmodern Novel', in *Naming the Rose: Essays on Eco's 'The Name of the Rose'*, edited by M. Thomas Inge (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1988), pp.48-61

Pavese, Cesare, *La casa in collina* (Turin: Einaudi, 1948), translated as *The House on the Hill* (London: Owen, 1956)

Pavese, Cesare, *Il diavolo sulle colline*, published with *La bella estate* and *Tra donne sole* under the title *La bella estate* (Turin: Einaudi, 1949) translated by W.J. Strachan as *The Devil in the Hills* (London: Owen, 1956)

Pavese, Cesare, *La letteratura americana e altri saggi* (Turin: Einaudi, 1962)

Pavese, Cesare, *La luna e i falò* (Turin: Einaudi, 1950), translated by Louise Sinclair as *The Moon and the Bonfire* (London: Owen, 1952)

Pedullà, Walter, *La Rivoluzione della letteratura*, second edition (Rome: Bulzoni, 1972)

Peirce, Charles S., *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, edited by Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss and Arthur W. Burks, 8 vols (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935-1966)

Peirce, Charles S., 'Guessing', *The Hound and Horn* 2 (1929), 267-282

Peirce, Charles S., *The New Elements of Mathematics*, edited by Carolyn Eisele, 4 vols (Mouton: The Hague, 1976)

Peirce, Charles S., *Selected Writings*, edited by Philip P. Wiener (New York: Dover, 1958)

Pepin, Ronald E., 'Adso's closing line in *The Name of the Rose*', *American Notes & Queries*, 24 (1986), 151-152

Pepin, Ronald E. (translation and introduction), *Scorn for the World: Bernard of Cluny's 'De Contemptu Mundi'*, *Medieval Texts and Studies* 8 (East Lansing, Michigan: Colleagues Press, 1991)

Petersson, R.T., *Sir Kenelm Digby: The Ornament of England 1603-1665* (London: Cape, 1956)

Pirandello, Luigi, *Naked Masks*, edited by Eric Bentley (New York: Dutton, 1952)

Pirandello, Luigi, *Opere di Luigi Pirandello: Maschere nude*, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 1958)

Pischedda, Bruno, *Come leggere Il nome della rosa di Umberto Eco* (Milan: Mursia, 1994)

Poe, Edgar Allan, *Collected Works*, edited by Thomas Ollive Mabbott (with Eleanor D. Kewer and Maureen C. Mabbott), 3 vols (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Belknap, 1978)

Poe, Edgar Allan, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, introduction by Sidney Kaplan (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960)

Poe, Edgar Allan, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, edited with an introduction and commentary by Harold Beaver (London: Penguin, 1975)

Polletta, Nicolas V., 'Conversazione in Sicilia: Literature as Nostalgia', *Italica* 41 (1964), 415-29

Potter, Joy Hamnuchen, 'An Ideological substructure in *Conversazione in Sicilia*', *Italica* 52:1 (1975), 59-69

Potter, Joy Hamnuchen, 'Patterns of Meaning in *Conversazione in Sicilia*', *Forum Italicum* 9:1 (1975), 60-73

Popper, Karl R., *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*, fourth (revised) edition (London: Routledge, 1972)

Popper, Karl R., *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (New York: Basic, 1959)

Popper, Karl R., *The Open Society and Its Enemies: Volume II, The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx and the Aftermath* (London: Routledge, 1945)

- Popper, Karl R., *The Poverty of Historicism*, second edition (London: Routledge, 1960)
- Porter, Dennis, *The Pursuit of Crime: Art and Ideology in Detective Fiction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981)
- Pozzato, Maria Pia (ed.), *L'idea deforme: Interpretazione ermetiche di Dante*, with an introduction by Umberto Eco (Milan: Bompiani, 1992)
- Puletti, Ruggero, *L'isola del giorno prima: Fantasia e realtà -- storia e cultura nel romanzo di Umberto Eco* (Manduria: Lacaita, 1997)
- Pynchon, Thomas, *The Crying of Lot 49* (London: Cape, 1967)
- Pynchon, Thomas, *Gravity's Rainbow* (New York: Vintage, 1973)
- Pynchon, Thomas, *V., a Novel* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1963)
- Pynchon, Thomas, *Vineland* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1990)
- Raffa, Guy P., 'Eco and Calvino Reading Dante', *Italica* 73:3 (1996), 388-409
- Raffa, Guy P., 'Walking and Swimming with Umberto Eco', *Modern Language Notes* 113:1 (1998), 164-85
- Rashke, Carl, 'Fire and Roses, or the Problem of Postmodern Religious Thinking', in *Shadow of Spirit: Postmodernism and Religion*, edited by Philippa Berry and Andrew Wernick (London: Routledge, 1992)
- Reeves, Marjorie, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study of Joachism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969)

- Reichardt, Paul F., '*The Name of the Rose: The Sign of the Apocalypse*', *Publications of the Missouri Philological Association* 9 (1984), 1-7
- Reyes-Tatinclaux, Leticia, 'The Face of Evil: Devilish Borges in Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', *Chasqui: Revista de Literatura Latinoamericana* 18 (1989), 3-9
- Reynolds, Nigel, 'Eco's Rose named best novel of past 20 years in world poll', *Daily Telegraph*, 10 November 1997, p.4
- Ricci, Franco (ed.), *Calvino Revisited*, University of Toronto Italian Studies 2 (Ottawa: Dovehouse, 1989)
- Richter, David H., 'Eco's Echoes: Semiotic Theory and Detective Practice in *The Name of the Rose*', *Studies in Twentieth Century Literature* 10 (1986), 213-236
- Richter, David H., 'The Mirrored World: Form and Ideology in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', in Rocco Capozzi (ed.), *Reading Eco: An Anthology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp.265-75
- Rignall, John, 'From City Streets to Country Houses: The Detective as *Flâneur*', in *The Art of Murder: New Essays on Detective Fiction*, edited by H. Gustav Klaus and Stephen Knight (Tübingen: Stauffenberg Verlag, 1998), pp.67-75
- Robbe-Grillet, Alain, *Dans le labyrinthe* (Paris: Minuit, 1959), translated by Richard Howarth as *In the Labyrinth*, in *Two Novels by Robbe-Grillet* (New York: Grove, 1965)
- Robbe-Grillet, Alain, *Les Gommages* (Paris: Minuit, 1953), translated by Richard Howard as *The Erasers* (New York: Grove, 1964)
- Robbe-Grillet, Alain, *Pour un nouveau roman* (Paris: Minuit, 1963), translated as *For a New Novel* (New York: Grove, 1965)

- Robbe-Grillet, Alain, *Le Voyeur* (Paris: Minuit, 1955), translated by Richard Howard as *The Voyeur* (London: Calder, 1958)
- Robin, Richard S., *Annotated Catalogue of the Papers of Charles S. Peirce* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1967)
- Rollin, Roger, 'The Name of the Rose as Popular Culture', in *Naming the Rose: Essays on Eco's 'The Name of the Rose'*, edited by M. Thomas Inge (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1988), pp.157-172
- Rorty, Richard, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982)
- Rorty, Richard, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)
- Rorty, Richard, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)
- Rorty, Richard, 'The Pragmatist's Progress', in Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, with Richard Rorty, Christine Brooke-Rose and Jonathan Culler, edited by Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp.89-108
- Rosso, Stefano, 'Postmodern Italy: Notes on the "Crisis of Reason", "Weak Thought", and *The Name of the Rose*', in *Exploring Postmodernism*, edited by Matei Calinescu and Douwe Fokkema (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1987), pp.79-92
- Rosso, Stefano and Carolyn Springer, 'A Correspondence with Umberto Eco', *Boundary 2* 12 (1983), 1-13
- Rudolf, Anthony, *At an uncertain hour: Primo Levi's war against oblivion* (London: Menard, 1990)

- Rubino, Carl A., 'The Invisible Worm: Ancients and Moderns in *The Name of the Rose*', *SubStance* 14:2 (1985), 54-63
- Rubino, Carl A., '"Oh Language Diabolical and Holy": Notes on the Extravagances of *Foucault's Pendulum*', *Modern Language Notes* 107 (1992), 828-839
- Rushdie, Salman, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Granta, 1991)
- Saladino, Salvatore, *Italy from Unification to 1919* (New York: Cromwell, 1970)
- Sallis, Steven, 'Naming the Rose: Readers and Codes in Umberto Eco's Novel', *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 19:2 (1986), 3-12
- Salvatorelli, Luigi, and Giovanni Mira, *Storia d'Italia nel periodo fascista* (Turin: Einaudi, 1964)
- Sampoli, Furio, 'The Italian Novel of Recent Years', *Italian Quarterly* 7:26 (1963), 16-32
- Sanguineti, Edoardo, *Capriccio italiano* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1963)
- Sanguineti, Edoardo, *Catamerone 1951-1971* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1974)
- Sanguineti, Edoardo, *Il giuoco dell'oca* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1967)
- Santoro, Liberato, 'The Name of the Game the Rose Plays', in *Italian Storytellers: Essays on Italian Narrative Literature*, edited by Eric Haywood and Cormac O'Cuilleanáin (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1989), pp.254-262
- Sbragia, Alberto, *Carlo Emilio Gadda and the Modern Macaronic* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996)

Sciascia, Leonardo, *L'Affaire Moro* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1978) translated together with *La scomparsa di Majorana* by Sacha Rabinovitch as *The Moro Affair and The Mystery of Majorana* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1987)

Sciascia, Leonardo, 'Appunti sul giallo', *Nuovo corrente* 1 (1954), 23-34

Sciascia, Leonardo, 'La carriera di Maigret', *Letteratura* 10 (1954), 73-5

Sciascia, Leonardo, *A ciascuno il suo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1966), translated by Adrienne Foulke as *A Man's Blessing* (London: Cape, 1968), retitled *To Each His Own* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1989)

Sciascia, Leonardo, *Il consiglio d'Egitto* (Turin: Einaudi, 1963), translated by Adrienne Foulke as *The Council of Egypt* (New York: Knopf, 1966)

Sciascia, Leonardo, *Il contesto* (Turin: Einaudi, 1971), translated by Adrienne Foulke as *Equal Danger* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973)

Sciascia, Leonardo, *Dalle parte degli infedeli* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1979)

Sciascia, Leonardo, *Il giorno della civetta* (Turin: Einaudi, 1961), translated by Archibald Colquhoun as *Mafia Vendetta* (London: Cape, 1963)

Sciascia, Leonardo, 'Letteratura del giallo', *Letteratura* 3 (1953), 65-7.

Sciascia, Leonardo, *Morte dell'Inquisitore* (Bari: Laterza, 1964), translated by J. Green in *Salt in the Wound* (with *The Death of the Inquisitor*) (New York: Orion, 1969)

Sciascia, Leonardo, *Le parocchie di Ragalpetra* (Bari: Laterza, 1956), translated by J. Green as *Salt in the Wound* (with *The Death of the Inquisitor*) (New York: Orion, 1969)

Sciascia, Leonardo, *La scomparsa di Majorana* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975)

Sciascia, Leonardo, *Il teatro della memoria* (Turin: Einaudi, 1981)

Sciascia, Leonardo, *Todo modo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1974)

Sciascia, Leonardo, *Gli zii di Sicilia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1958), translated by N.S. Thompson as *Sicilian Uncles* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1986)

Schiavoni, Franco, 'Faith, Reason and Desire: Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', *Meanjin* 43:4 (1984), 573-581

Schneider, Marilyn, 'Calvino at a Crossroads: *Il castello dei destini incrociati*', *PMLA* 95 (1980), 73-90

Schulze, Leonard G., 'An Ethics of Significance', *SubStance* 14:2 (1985), 87-101

Sebeok, Thomas A., and Jean Umiker-Sebeok, '"You Know My Method": A Juxtaposition of Charles S. Peirce and Sherlock Holmes', in Umberto Eco and Thomas A. Sebeok (eds.), *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp.11-54

Sica, Gabriella, *Sanguineti* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1974)

Schlegel, Friedrich, *Friedrich Schlegel's Lucinde and the Fragments*, translated by Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971)

Schlegel, Friedrich, *Philosophical Fragments*, translated by Peter Firchow, foreword by Rodolphe Gasché (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991)

Schweighardt, Theophilus, *Speculum sopicum Rhodo-Stauroticum, Das ist: Weilauffige Entdeckung des Collegii und axiomatum von sondern erleuchten Fraternitet Christi-Rosen Creutz* ([n.p.]: [n.pub.], 1618)

Severijnen, Olav, '“Bin ich ein Gott?”: The Problem of Narrative in Umberto Eco's *Foucault's Pendulum* and Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*', *Neophilologus* 75 (1991), 327-41

Shadwell, Thomas, *The Virtuoso*, edited by Marjorie Hope Nicholson and David Stuart Rhodes (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1966)

Shea, Robert and Robert Anton Wilson, *The Illuminatus! Trilogy* (New York: Dell, 1975)

Shepherd, Michael, *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of Dr Freud* (London: Tavistock, 1985)

Skrine, Peter N., *The Baroque: Literature and Culture in Seventeenth-Century Europe* (London: Methuen, 1978)

Smith, April Kenziora, 'The 'Other' in Borges, Borges in Others', *Perspectives on Contemporary Literature* 12 (1986), 104-112

Sobel, Dava, *Longitude: The True Story of a Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Puzzle of His Time* (London: Fourth Estate, 1996)

Sodi, Risa B., *A Dante of Our Time: Primo Levi and Auschwitz* (New York: Lang, 1990)

Sokal, Alan, 'A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies', *Lingua Franca* 6:4 (1996), 62-4

Sokal, Alan, and Jean Bricmont, *Intellectual Impostures* (London: Profile, 1998)

Spinks, C.W., 'Semiotic Shell Games: *Foucault's Pendulum* and Conspiracy Theory', *Romance Languages Annual* 3 (1991), 594-597

Spinoza, Benedictus de [Baruch], *Opera*, edited by C. Gebhardt, 4 vols, Auftrag der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, (Heidelberg: Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1924)

Sprat, Thomas, *History of the Royal Society* (1667), edited by Jackson I. Cope and Harold Whitmore Jones (St. Louis, Missouri: Washington University Press, 1958)

Stauder, Thomas, 'Naming the Rose -- Petal by Petal: An Investigation of Umberto Eco's Sources', *Vortex: A Critical Review* 1 (1987), 8-9, 31

Stevenson, Robert Louis, *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, with bibliographical notes by Edmund Gosse, 20 vols (London: Cassell, 1906)

Stephens, Walter E., 'Ec[h]o in Fabula', *Diacritics* 13:2 (1983), 51-66

Stimson, Dorothy, *Scientists and Amateurs: A History of the Royal Society* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1948)

Sturrock, John, *The French New Novel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969)

Sumner, Judith, 'The Dismembered Word in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', in *Translation Perspectives IV: Selected Papers, 1986-87*, edited by Marilyn Gaddis Rose (Binghampton: Translation Research and Instruction Program, State University of New York Press, 1988), pp.159-170

Symons, Julian, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel: A History* (London: Faber, 1972)

Tani, Stefano, *The Doomed Detective: The Contribution of the Detective Novel to Postmodern American and Italian Fiction* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984)

- Tannenbaum, Edward R., *The Fascist Experience: Italian Society and Culture, 1922-1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1972)
- Tannenbaum, Edward R., *Modern Italy: A topical history since 1861* (New York: New York University Press, 1974)
- Tenenbaum, Louis, 'The Italian Novel: Traditions and New Paths' in *Contemporary European Novelists*, edited by Siegfried Mandel (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968), pp.126-57
- Thompson, Doug, *Cesare Pavese: A study of the major novels and poems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982)
- Timmerman, John H., 'Umberto Eco and Aristotle: A Dialogue on the Lost Treatise: Comedy', *Christian Scholar's Review* 17 (1987), 9-24
- Todorov, Tzvetan, 'Typologie du roman policier', in *Poétique de la Prose* (Paris: Seuil, 1971), pp.55-65, translated by Richard Howard as 'The Typology of Detective Fiction', in *The Poetics of Prose*, foreword by Jonathan Culler (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977), pp.42-52
- Tournier, Michel, *Le Roi des Aulnes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), translated by Barbara Bray as *The Ogre* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1997)
- Tournier, Michel, *Vendredi, ou les limbes du Pacifique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), translated by Norman Denny as *Friday, or the Other Island* (London: Collins, 1969)
- Truffaut, François, *Hitchcock*, with the collaboration of Helen G. Scott (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968)
- Verene, Donald Philip, 'Philosophical Laughter: Vichian Remarks on Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*', *New Vico Studies* 2 (1984), 75-81

Vernon, Victoria V., 'The Demonics of (True) Belief: Treacherous Texts, Blasphemous Interpretations and Murderous Readers', *Modern Language Notes* 107 (1992), 840-854

Viegnes, Michel, 'Interview with Umberto Eco', *L'Anello Che Non Tiene: Journal of Modern Literature* 2 (1990), 57-75

Vittorini, Edwina, 'Vittorini's *Uomini e no*: An Epic of the Resistance?', *Durham University Journal* 62 (1970), 65-80

Vittorini, Elio, *Conversazione in Sicilia* (Milan: Bompiani, 1942)

Vittorini, Elio, *Uomini e no* (Milan: Bompiani, 1945)

Voltaire, *Zadig and other Romances*, translated by H.I. Woolf and Wilfred S. Jackson, introduction and notes by H.I. Woolf (New York: Rarity Press, 1931)

Waite, Arthur Edward, *The Real History of the Rosicrucians* (London: Redway, 1887)

Wakefield, Walter L., and Austin P. Evans, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages, Records of Civilization: Sources and Studies* 81 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969)

Walsh, John, *Poe the Detective: The Curious Circumstances Behind The Mystery of Marie Roget* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1968)

Warnke, Frank J., *Versions of Baroque: European Literature in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale, 1972)

Weaver, William, 'Pendulum Diary', *Southwest Review* 75 (1990), 150-178

Weiss, Beno, *Understanding Italo Calvino* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 1993)

West, Paul, 'Italy', in *The Modern Novel*, 2 vols (New York: Hillary House, 1967), II, pp. 354-82

Westfall, Richard, *Never at Rest: The Life of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980)

Williams, J.E.D., *From Sails to Satellites: The Origin and Development of Navigational Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

Williams, Raymond, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973)

Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. Logisch-philosophische Abhandlung* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1964)

Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963)

Woodall, James, *The Man in the Mirror of the Book: A Life of Jorge Luis Borges* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996)

Woodhouse, J.R., 'Fantasy, alienation and the *Racconti* of Italo Calvino', *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 6 (1970), 399-412

Woodhouse, J.R., *Italo Calvino: a reappraisal and an appreciation of the trilogy* (Hull: University of Hull, 1968)

Woodhouse, J.R., *A Short History of Italian Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980)

Wright, Ralph, O.S.B., 'Laughter according to Rose: The Theme of Laughter in *The Name of the Rose*', *American Benedictine Review* 37 (1986), 396-403

Yates, Frances A., *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1972)

Yeager, Robert F., 'Fear of Writing, or Adso and the Poisoned Text', *SubStance* 14:2 (1985), 40-53

Zangrandi, Ruggero, *Il lungo viaggio attraverso il fascismo* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1962)

Zamora, Lois Parkinson, 'Umberto Eco's Revelation: *The Name of the Rose*', *Humanities in the South* 61 (1985), 3-5